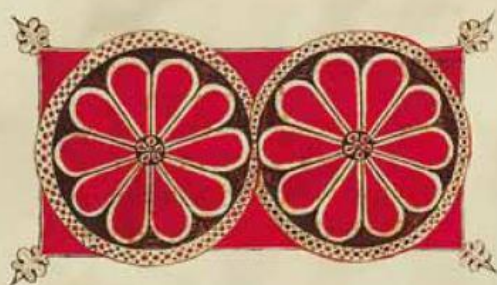




*Experiencing
the Apocalypse at the
Limits of Alterity*



LEIF HONGISTO

BRILL

Experiencing the Apocalypse
at the Limits of Alterity

Biblical Interpretation Series

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By

Leif Hongisto



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INTRODUCTION

The gift of vision is a challenge, it is also an opportunity.
But only, I believe,
if we are prepared to root our looking and seeing in the body of feeling.¹

More than any other New Testament text, the Apocalypse² is continually part of societal discourse, in both religious and secular contexts.³ The predominantly secular western culture makes use of motifs, symbolism and scenarios derived from both the Apocalypse itself and its interpretations. Ordinary speech makes use of the word apocalyptic to refer to a multiplicity of things: from anything pointless or outlandish to insurmountable evil that overcomes humanity. Even the term apocalypse has become a common designation for envisionments of super-natural, immanent and catastrophic end-of-the-world depictions.⁴ In current media headlines, the term apocalypse stands for calamity, catastrophe and chaos.⁵ The assumed end-of-the-present-history worldview of the Apocalypse has had and still has influence on literature, lyrics and the visual arts,⁶ and, consequently, on other disciplines using these second-

¹ Levin, D. M. "Understanding: Learning to Stand on the Earth and Stand under the Sky." J. R. Watson, ed. *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 109.

² The last book of the New Testament is referred to by different names. Throughout this presentation, I will refer to the text as the Apocalypse.

³ 'Revelation is widely popular for the wrong reasons.' Raymond E. Brown, cited in Borg, M. J. *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2002) 265.

⁴ Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 1.

⁵ One of the many examples in business papers, 'An apocalyptic mood has seized the highest levels of global capital as the global financial system continues to implode.' Bello, W. "Capitalism in an Apocalyptic Mood." *Foreign Policy in Focus*, February 20, 2008.

⁶ Charlotte Brontë, Leo Tolstoy, Fjodor Dostoevsky, Thomas Mann, Emanuel Swedenborg, Friedrich Engels, D. H. Lawrence, Bertolt Brecht, and William Blake, to mention a few. In addition to these and others, comes the Hollywood film industry. Judith L. Kovacs and Christopher Rowland discuss the far-reaching influence of the Apocalypse on society and culture, and the impact it has had on the Christian Church through the ages. They consider its effect, not only on theologians from Origen and Augustine to late twentieth-century theologians of liberation, but also on writers, art-

ary sources, such as film and music. The apparent popularity of the discerned themes of the Apocalypse tends to fall back on a fascination with envisioned power struggles, in accordance with a long tradition of expected celestial scenarios coinciding with terrestrial events. The themes that seem to fascinate contemporary audiences are similar to those that engaged the mystics of antiquity, themes that incorporate a recurrent, even inevitable movement towards and between alternative realities. The majority of these traditions stem from the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g. Ezekiel and Isaiah), the pseudonymous authors of apocalyptic writings of the intertestamental period (e.g. 4Ezra and 2Baruch), the anonymous visionaries of late antiquity (e.g. the rabbinic authors of the Heikhalot texts and of Merkabah mysticism) and the renowned spiritualists of the Middle Ages (e.g. Joachim of Fiore).

When considering trends in New Testament exegetical studies, we find ample attention given to eschatological thoughts – both idealistic and historic – that frame the ancient writings;⁷ however, we encounter little concern in traditional scholarship with the bearing of such thoughts on common or popular readings of biblical texts. Although rooted in traditional methods of literary analysis, the present study seeks to elucidate the reading experience of a biblical text beyond the customary ways in which biblical scholars view such experience. Exegetes of the Apocalypse, mostly in an effort to explain the frameworks that guide millenarian expressions, have usually employed the interpretative methods of biblical, historical, and sociological scholarship.⁸

ists, musicians, political figures, visionaries and others, including Dante, Hildegard of Bingen, Milton, Newton, the English Civil War radicals, Dürer, Turner, Blake, Handel, and Franz Schmidt. Kovacs, J. L. and C. Rowland. *Revelation: The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Rowland, C. "Imagining the Apocalypse." *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005) 303–27.

⁷ Paradoxically, although both exegetes and common readers show continued interest in the Apocalypse, the study of the book tends to receive only a fraction of the amount of scholarly attention devoted to Gospels and Pauline studies. Bauckham, R. *The Climax of Prophecy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993) ix. While the relationship between the text of the Bible and history has dominated studies, the notion of a biblical text as narrative is relatively new. Royalty, R. M. *The Streets of Heaven. The Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998); Barr, D. *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Sonoma: Polebridge Press, 1998).

⁸ O'Leary, S. *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 143–5. For critical analysis of premillennial and postmillennial apocalyptic rhetoric, see Bummett, B. *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric* (New

Such efforts include the analysis of the reception history of the text,⁹ which sheds light on the influence of the Apocalypse on religious and cultural history.¹⁰ Mine is a reader-experience approach, complementary to the historical-critical, structural and reader-response approaches; it is intended to make up for the fact that the reader is seldom allowed to enter the narrative. The validity of the traditional methods notwithstanding, this study favours an experientiality approach. It aims to balance the dominant methods of biblical scholarship with those appropriate for analysing the reader's cognitive involvement in the narration of the text, the experiencing of the artefact.

My Previous Encounter with the Apocalypse

Every book has its prehistory; so does also this study. A very practical and personal encounter with the Apocalypse eventually led to the present project. In 1999, I was part of a production team creating a radio theatre performance of the Apocalypse, which was broadcasted under the heading 'Johanneksen Ilmestys' over the Finnish national radio, YLE Radio 1, on December 31, 1999.¹¹ A similar performance reading of the Apocalypse was presented in 2005 by David Rhoads, professor of New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago.¹²

As one engaged in directing the performance of the text of the Apocalypse, I became conscious of how its composition helps create an experience that is sensitive to both its oral and literary schemata. I

York: Praeger, 1991) 123–75, and Weber, E. *Apocalypses. Prophecies, Cults, and Millennial Beliefs through the Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁹ Some scholars claim that the Apocalypse depicts a 'controlled process of semiosis' that is supposed to create 'the basic paradigm of relevance'. Simojoki, A. *Apocalypse Interpreted* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1997) 164. However, this would imply not taking seriously the openness of the text.

¹⁰ For overviews of the influence of the *Apocalypse* on *the end of the world* expectations, see Court, J. M. "A Future for Eschatology?" M. D. Carroll R., D. J. A. Clines, and P. R. Davies, eds. *The Bible in Human Society: Essays in Honour of John Rogerson* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 186–204; Stackhouse, R. *The End of the World? A New Look at an Old Belief* (New York: Paulist, 1997); Bauckham, R. and T. A. Hart. *Hope Against Hope: Christian Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 72–173; Newport, K. G. C. *Apocalypse and Millennium: Studies in Biblical Eisegesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Kovacs, J. L. and C. Rowland. *Revelation* 1–38.

¹¹ A CD recording with a running time of 1.47'50 is available at www.yle.fi/yleshop.

¹² The video is available from SELECT, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio.

discovered that its orality could have something to do with the way a reader deals with the Apocalypse in its narrative literary form. There was a discrepancy between the artefact's key elements for an oral experience and the way it has come down to us, just as it, as a literary document, continues to contribute to the makeup of our consciousness. The active involvement in the recording disclosed a particular engagement by the readers and listeners. During the performance Vesa Vierikko, a professional actor, became personally engaged and the act of telling brought out individual emotional undertones. In accordance with the perspective of cognitive poetics, the visualization and the schemata of the narrated situation evoked feelings that were reflected upon.¹³ The sensitivity that I attributed to the activation of oral schemata seemed to draw attention to a gap in biblical scholarship and the way it builds on schemata of literary criticism and literary interpretation. I recognized the need to go beyond or behind what the analysis of characters, the plot, the chronology of the events, or the search for a symbolic interpretation contribute to our understanding of the experience of the Apocalypse. The actual oral performance of the Apocalypse creates an impression of a circular or completed sense of time similar to that of a Greek drama¹⁴ while cognition is processed through suppleness for

¹³ This is supported by David Miall's study on readers' response to a literary story. He found out that 45 percent of the comments referred to readers' feelings (amusement, conflict, confusion, curiosity, empathy, excitement, irritation), and 12 percent to the characters' feelings. In other words, over half of the comments involved emotions, suggesting that they are a primary component of readers' experience. Miall, D. "Cognitive Poetics: From Interpreting to Experiencing What Is Literary." Paper presented at the Anglistentag colloquium, University of Münster, Germany, September 23–26, 2007.

¹⁴ Bowman, J. W. *The First Christian Drama: The Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955) argues for similarities between the Apocalypse and Greek drama. He notes that the Apocalypse is a dramatic unity: the course of action consists of the development of a small number of central images around a single theme. Analogously to a Greek play, the Apocalypse presents a notion of time in which a character is able to look simultaneously at the past, present and future, all compressed together so closely that a viewer sees them as part of one picture. The success of the Apocalypse as a play lies in the narrative device of depicted historic action pushing against, but not breaking the visionary form. See also Driver, T. *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 125; Ruiz, J.-P. "Betwixt and Between on the Lord's Day: Liturgy and the Apocalypse." D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of the Apocalypse. Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 227–9. Similar kinds of observations of elements of the Greek tragedy have been made concerning the formal aspects of the Fourth Gospel. Brant, J.-A. A. *Dialogue and Drama. Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel*

alterations (alternative specific meanings).

Most commentators regard the ambivalence of the narrative as an obstacle, whereas it could well have – intentional or not – relevance for the reader's experience. In view of this, I have wanted to continue studying the Apocalypse to understand the experience with the artefact. As I had observed, the Apocalypse as a narrative provides a reflective awareness with inherent alternative poetic possibilities. I was interested in how these different aspects work simultaneously on the reader. Monika Fludernik's narrative theory based on the cognitive reliance on embodied schemata and real-life frames proved to be of great value. Her theoretical approach is helpful to explain how the features of the artefact, if they are combined with the reader's embodied frame, create a particular consciousness. A reader/listener in an encounter with the storyworld of the Apocalypse is involved in an active process of narrativization, i.e. making the experienced understandable. This process is not interrupted, it is in fact intensified, when the reader is confronted with inconstant characters, settings, and tangled event outlines.¹⁵ The paradoxical consequence is a form of narrativization in which the span of attention corresponds to the reading experience, and the narratee constructs the text's real-time in terms of aligning the narrative with experiential cognitive parameters that extend into previous and possibly future temporalities.¹⁶

Cognitive Parameters

Fludernik points out that most narratives operate on four experiential cognitive parameters or models that evoke a real-life impression.¹⁷

(Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004); Estes, D. *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel. A Theory of Hermeneutical Relativity in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

¹⁵ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (London: Routledge, 1996) 269–73.

¹⁶ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 313.

¹⁷ In the past twenty years, narrative theory has widened its scope by moving from its early structuralist stage to a phase in which it opens itself to other methodologies. Apart from the 'narratologies' collected in D. Herman, ed. *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1999), a great number of narratological praxis has developed, including linguistic and cognitive approaches. Nünning, A. "Towards a Cultural and Historical Narratology: A Survey of Diachronic Approaches, Concepts, and Research Projects." B. Reitz and S. Rieuwerts, eds. *Anglistentag (1999) Mainz. Proceedings* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2000) 345–73; Fludernik, M. "Beyond Structuralism in Narratology: Recent Develop-

The reporting model operates on the basis of real-life authentication through a witness report and therefore undermines the necessary distinction between the historical person as witness of an incident and the narrator of that incident – this corresponds to the I-narrator of the Apocalypse. The narrator is frequently involved in the substance of the narrative with a privileged access to information – the narration of the Apocalypse exemplifies knowledge about things that are not explicitly told or shown. The experiential model consists of the protagonists' experience that attains central importance – the urgency to share what is to take place soon. This model builds on the dynamic interrelation between the newsworthiness of the narrated matter and its significance for the current communicational situation; it converts parts of the tension between the incidence and the reaction into a theme. The oral model cascades the narrator as a personalized narrator who points out where he heard or read about what he is to tell – the visionary appropriation of the Apocalypse. The authenticating claim of a personal witness is a significant feature. The mental model underlines the aspect that we are aware of our experience of deliberation and argument and assumes the presence of an author behind the narrative – the guiding

ments and New Horizons in Narrative Theory." *Anglistik* 11 (2000) 83–96; Richardson, B. "Recent Concepts of Narrative and the Narratives of Narrative Theory." *Style* 34 (2000) 168–75. These works have been flanked by a number of those of the more traditional school, specializing in formal and theoretical questions, familiar from G. Genette and F. K. Stanzel, and now treated with greater theoretical sophistication. Chatman, S. "What Is Narrative? Some Basic Terms." Chatman, S. *Reading Narrative Fiction* (New York: Macmillan, 1993) 7–19; O'Neill, P. *The Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Cohn, D. *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Prince, G. "Revisiting Narrativity." W. Grünzweig and A. Solbach, eds. *Transcending Boundaries: Narratology in Context* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1999) 43–51; Carroll, N. "On the Narrative Connection." W. van Peer and S. Chatman, eds. *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001) 21–41; Sternberg, M. "How Narrativity Makes a Difference." *Narrative* 9 (2001) 115–22; Genette, G. "Frontiers of Narrative." Genette, G. *Figures of Literary Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) 127–44; Schmid, W. "Narrativity and Eventfulness." T. Kindt and H. H. Müller, eds. *What Is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003) 16–33; Pier, J. "Narrative Configurations." J. Pier, ed. *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) 239–68; Ryan, M.-L. "Tellability." D. Herman, M. Jahn, and M. L. Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005) 589–91; Baker, M. *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (London: Routledge, 2006) 50–104.

nous of the Apocalypse, which the reader faces. These cognitive activities of our reading/listening experience lead to an overall experiential impact. This is fashioned by the narrative's lexical, syntactical and structural schemata. Thus, acting, experiencing, viewing and thinking (reflecting) constitute the four basic models or parameters of cognitive activities or processes within narratives.¹⁸

The approach developed in this study does not primarily aim at showing what the narrative means or meant to say, how it creates a visual coded system for its understanding, or how the author's perspective can be reconstructed in order to locate its meaning. Although this is generally expected from a literary critical approach to a biblical text, what is relevant for my approach is to explore how the ambivalence of the schemata, literary or oral, temporal or spatial, is an intrinsic part of the discourse. My interest is in investigating how the process of reading or hearing apprehends this ambivalence as a narrative experience. Thus, in my line of thinking, the study of the Apocalypse may benefit from understanding the book's reading experience, while bracketing temporarily factual interpretations demarking specific meanings. Moreover, such understanding may provide additional and useful insights into these meanings – if they are indeed demonstrable.

Outline of the Study

Part One is a theoretical discussion on the decisive elements that invite various readings of the Apocalypse. It starts by presenting the theoretical positioning, certain assumptions and definitions and analytical methods for the study, which are dealt with in the three chapters of Part One. Chapter One consists of an overview of the conceptual framework, with reference to the notion of experiencing the narrativity of the Apocalypse. In Chapter Two, elements of the form influencing the narrative experience of the Apocalypse extend the theoretical grounding. Chapter Three sets out in detail the conceptual positioning. This chapter also reflects on the essential gaps in interpretive methods applied to the Apocalypse as the textual or oral artefact that the reader, or listener, encounters and experiences. Part One argues for a new analytical approach and relevant parameters to appreciate the formal-technical narratological properties, the (social) cognitive narratological features and the special imagining quality of the Apocalypse, where the apocalyptic

¹⁸ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 63–5.

medium is part of the message.

In Part Two, the analysis of the narrative elements illustrates the features discussed in Part One and their specific functionalities in the narrative experience of the Apocalypse that contribute to the generation of diverse readings. Chapters Four and Five analyse the alternating positions of seeing and telling that are accomplished through different narrator voices. Chapter Four explicates narrative positioning, culminating with an exploration of the deictic forms of visionary appropriation. Chapter Five deals with the readers' appropriation of the multifunctional narrating schemata between narrator and co-narrator. Chapter Six addresses the reader or listener experience and considers the dissonance and the convergence with alterity ('otherness') that permeates the readers' experience. The focus is on the process of reading and experiencing in real-life situation. Chapter Seven examines further aspects that contribute to the imagistic (descriptive of the power to conjure up vivid images)¹⁹ quality of the Apocalypse: its peculiar temporal and spatial schemata, and its perplexing conceptual overlaps.

The conclusion sums up the main findings. In a separate postscript, I briefly sketch my proposal for structuring the Apocalypse into smaller units. This structuring, though based on textual markers, is not immediately obvious to the narratee of the Apocalypse in the process of reading, but requires an analytical distance from the direct experiencing of the text. Such a distance allows the reader/listener to discern a literary progression that the author has used to produce the work, thus facilitating the guiding nous behind and around the text.

¹⁹ Or of the capacity of enabling a visual apprehension, evoking a cognitive perception of a visual scene, a pictorial representation. Whitehouse, H. *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission* (Walnut Creek: Rowman, 2004) 106–18. This is in contrast to 'imaginistic' as a method and acknowledges that it is not what you look at that matters but what you see. Chen, C. *Mapping Scientific Frontiers: The Quest for Knowledge Visualization* (London: Springer, 2003) 67. In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid captured the gist of 'imaginism', 'What nature denied to human vision he enjoyed with his inner eye.' Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, C. Martin, transl. and ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005) 522. Or, as his contemporary Publius Syrus put it, 'The eyes are not responsible when the mind does the seeing.' Publius Syrus. *The Moral Sayings of Publius Syrus, a Roman Slave*, transl. D. Lyman (Boston: L. E. Bernard, 1856) 51. For Publius Syrus as author, see Fowler, W. W. *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero* (Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2007) 132.

PART ONE

APOCALYPSE, A TEXT LOOKING FOR A READING

CHAPTER ONE

CRITICAL ORIENTATION

Those who have ears to hear,
let them listen!¹

The present research presents a critical reading of the Apocalypse within biblical exegesis. Its motivation is to look beyond preoccupation with the textual expression, in order to include the experience the reading triggers. As commonly agreed, it is difficult to link together the seemingly unconnected parts of the Apocalypse as narrative. Equally challenging is to provide means of accounting for what appear to be diverse and contrasting themes. I combine the text and its formal elements with the mind processes that produce and consume it.² Such mind processes activate cognitive real-life and historical frames, personal and cultural. Thus, this study supposes a willingness to assume choice and construction, no matter how unpretentious, as a worthwhile option for gaining access to the narrative of the Apocalypse and its potential. As Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck point out, it would be wrong to forget the narrative aspects of a story and to focus exclusively on content.³ In other words, in my thinking it is the way the Apocalypse is narrated that turns it into what it is.

¹ Mark 4.9. All translations from the Bible are my own.

² A common way of dealing with the peculiarities of the Apocalypse has been to study it in small segments. However, in such readings the coherence and the continuity of the text remain elusive. In the late 1980s, Böcher noted that the last three decades of research had been characterized by studies of mostly individual motifs. Böcher, O. *Die Johannes Apocalypse* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988) 23. Smith, in his turn, comments on the structure of the narrative that there are almost as many proposed outlines as there are commentators on the Apocalypse. Smith, C. "The Structure of the Book of Revelation in the Light of Apocalyptic Literary Convention." *Novum Testamentum* 36 (1994) 373–4.

³ Herman, L. and B. Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005) 7.

1.1 QUESTIONS AND METHOD

With my analysis of the Apocalypse as a literary artefact that depicts divine revelation and thus induces a narrative experience, I wish to underscore the properties of the text that have not received due attention in traditional historical and source critical approaches. As a point of departure, one particular aspect that guides my approach is worth emphasizing. Louise Rosenblatt sees the relation between reader and text not as linear but situational,⁴ as an event occurring in a context of time and space. What does this mean for an analysis? The logical implication is that the kind of reader response⁵ and narrative criticism usually practiced within biblical exegesis that avoids situational and contextual parameters inadvertently assumes a fresh, first time reader encounter with the text. Instead, as Mark Powell notes when dealing with New Testament writings, these texts assume knowledge of their content and of formal choices, and suppose multiple readings.⁶ Essentially, scholarly exegesis does not ignore the role of the reader, yet generally, what the reader knows before reading is deemed secondary to the text.

In addressing questions with regard to the reader, scholarship constructs a potential reader, preferably one who can be considered a match to the text being analysed.⁷ As a rule, such a reader, equipped with ideal skills to interpret the text in question, turns out to be an informed reader – a reader who consistently brings personal knowledge and experience into the situatedness of reading. This may have applied to the original reader, but does not necessarily apply to present-day reader/listener. Brian Incigneri remarks that the original reader in fact knew far more than the information given in the New Testament text.⁸ Furthermore, Incigneri observes that critics overlook the probability that the original reader knew some of the people personally, or knew

⁴ Rosenblatt, L. M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978) 18–9.

⁵ Norman Holland points out that reader-response theorists uncritically assume that language is active and the reader is not. Holland, N. N. *The Critical I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) 117–8.

⁶ Powell, M. A. *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 20.

⁷ Fowler, R. “Who is ‘the Reader’ in Reader-Response Criticism?” *Semeia* 31 (1985) 16–7.

⁸ Incigneri, B. *The Gospel to the Romans. The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark’s Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 35–6.

others, who knew them. If so, this affects the way the text is read as well as how it is written. A different situation prevails for the contemporary reader, who seldom approaches the text or the artefact with prior understanding of it. While this implies openness for multiple readings, it also constitutes a disadvantage for contemporary readers without the relevant knowledge, or with unfamiliar literary schemata.

The narrative experience emerging from the interplay between the text and the reader's alien cognitive schemata can be confusing. Accordingly, by adopting the primary assumption that the text builds on existing knowledge, values and emotions⁹ of the reader, this study addresses a set of questions from a cognitive narratological point of view. It sets out to explore the relationship between the text and the mental states the text expands into, which include not only cognition and perception, but also dispositions, feelings and beliefs. Thus, to support my text analysis, I draw on narratological theories that are informed by cognitive and social science.¹⁰ My methodological framework builds on theories developed within the field of cognitive narratology, combining the approaches of Monika Fludernik¹¹ and David Herman.¹²

My choice of method is an attempt to answer the question: What are reader/listeners doing during their reading/listening participa-

⁹ Damasio, A. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 2000) 93.

¹⁰ Luomanen, P., I. Pyysiäinen, and R. Uro, eds. *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). I want to avoid eclecticism and yet be aware of that every disciplinary approach yields an insufficient explanation and interpretation of the complex phenomena of the world. See Esterlin, N. and B. Riebling, eds. *After Poststructuralism. Interdisciplinary and Literary Theory* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993) 17, 33.

¹¹ Fludernik, M. *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction: The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 1993); Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*; Fludernik, M. "Beyond Structuralism in Narratology" 83–96; Fludernik, M. "Cognitive Narratology: Natural Narratology and Cognitive Parameters." D. Herman, ed. *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (Stanford: CSLI Publications, 2003) 243–67; Fludernik, M. "Identity/Alterity." D. Herman, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 260–73; Fludernik, M. *An Introduction to Narrative* (London: Routledge, 2009).

¹² Herman, D. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Herman, D. "Cognitive Narratology." P. Hühn et al., eds. *Handbook of Narratology* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009) 161–73; Herman, D. "Narrative Ways of Worldmaking." S. Heinen and R. Sommer, eds. *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009) 71–87.

tion? From a wider theoretical perspective, cognitive parameters have entered the academic discourse in interpretative disciplines and are emerging in specialized academic work alongside exegesis. Cognitive narratology regards narrative as a basic mode of thinking or as a cognitive instrument;¹³ consequently, cognitive narratology is impelled by the idea of narrative representation as a form of cognition.

While looking for a heuristic tool, I first turned to the transactional theory of reading by Louise Rosenblatt, who contends that meaning resides above the reader-text interaction; it is therefore neither subject nor object nor an interaction of the two.¹⁴ My thinking however has moved further, or rather, a step back. A narrative approach in my understanding does not search for the locus of meaning, but examines the

¹³ Researchers from various disciplines have turned to narrative as the organizing principle by which the human mind constructs experience. Mishler, E. G. "A Matter of Time: When, since, after Labov and Waletzky." M. G. W. Bamberg, ed. *Oral Versions of Personal Experience: Three Decades of Narrative Analysis* (Mahwah: Erlbaum, 1998) 69–73. For the 'Narrative Turn' in social studies, see Czarniawska-Jorges, B. *Narratives in Social Science Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2004) 1–17.

¹⁴ P. David Pearson provides an account of the past forty years of scholarship on reading research and theory. He outlines perspectives deriving from linguistics [Fries, C. C. *Linguistics and Reading* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962); Chomsky, N. *Syntactic Structures* (s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1957); Chomsky, N. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965)], cognitive psychology [Kintsch, W. with the collaboration of E. J. Crothers et al. *The Representation of Meaning in Memory* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1974); Meyer, B. J. F. *The Organization of Prose and Its Effects on Memory* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1975)], and schema theory [Rumelhart, D. E. *Schemata: The Building Blocks of Cognition* (San Diego: Center for Human Information Processing, University of California, 1980)]. Pearson, however, recognizes that, in psychological theory, the role of schema theory, as a model of memory and cognition, is diminished [McNamara, T. P., D. L. Miller, and J. D. Bransford. *Mental Models and Reading Comprehension* (New York: Longman, 1991)]. Pearson makes a further notice that, prior to the sociolinguistic perspective on reading research, 'context' typically meant the print that surrounded particular words on a page. The significance of the sociolinguistic perspective was to expand the concept to consider the literacy event that shaped the reading to incorporate not only readers' prior knowledge in the form of schemata, but also the meaning constructed by peers and by cultural ancestors. As to reader response theories, Louise Rosenblatt contends that meaning is created in the transaction between reader and document: something new and different comes out of the inputs and influences of the text. Pearson, P. D. "American Reading Instruction since 1967." N. B. Smith, ed. *American Reading Instruction: Special Edition* (Newark: International Reading Association, 2002) 419–86; Rosenblatt, L. M. *Literature as Exploration*, 5th edition (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1996); Rosenblatt, L. M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*.

process of interaction as a reading experience. I therefore have chosen Fludernik's narratological approach to inform my analytical method.

Fludernik's theory is built upon the interrelations obtained among three kinds of cognitive frames: first, the ones reader/listeners employ for understanding conversational narrative, including concern with 'tellability and point' of the narrative, elements that lend themselves to meaning creation. Second, the cognitive frame of real-life experience that embodies the narrative in the natural world, i.e. experientiality. Third, reader/listeners use a cognitive frame of explanatory means to make sense of puzzling textual data.

From the perspective of the reader, Fludernik comes up with 'narrativizing' and 'narrativization', two concepts that have previously and mostly been applied to the author. She demonstrates how readers naturalize texts, in other words, add 'narrativity' to them. This process is carried on by listeners, who essentially, and as an experience within their worlds, convert texts into narratives. Fludernik thus stresses the active role of listeners in framing texts as narratives, the point that is often overlooked.¹⁵

Herman's narrative theory, on the other hand, complements a cognitively based narrative approach. Reader/listeners reconstruct the storyworld of the narrative. According to Herman, storyworlds are 'mental models of who did what and to or with whom, when, where and why'. Storyworlds also make understood the cognitive way reader/listeners transpose themselves from their own reality into another world in a process of meaning creation or narrative experience. According to Herman, readers are involved in sorting textual data into states, events, and actions; in other words, in conceptualizing the temporality, space, and perspective of the narrative, they anchor the storyworld in a particular context.¹⁶

As a narrative experience, the reading/listening covers a wide situational perspective. It encompasses what other historic-critical or reader-response approaches refer to as historical reading, yet from the additional perspective of the participation of the reader. Participation takes form through cognitive real-life frames (of old and recent experiences) and leads to a process of immediate as well as renewed reading

¹⁵ The schema below exemplifies the natural narratology cognitive parameters. Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 43–50.

¹⁶ See discussion in Scholes, R. E., J. Phelan, and R. Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative: Revised and Expanded* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 290–2.

experiences. An overview of the theoretical frame emerging from the methodology apparatus for this study is presented below in Figure 1, drawing upon Fludernik and Herman.

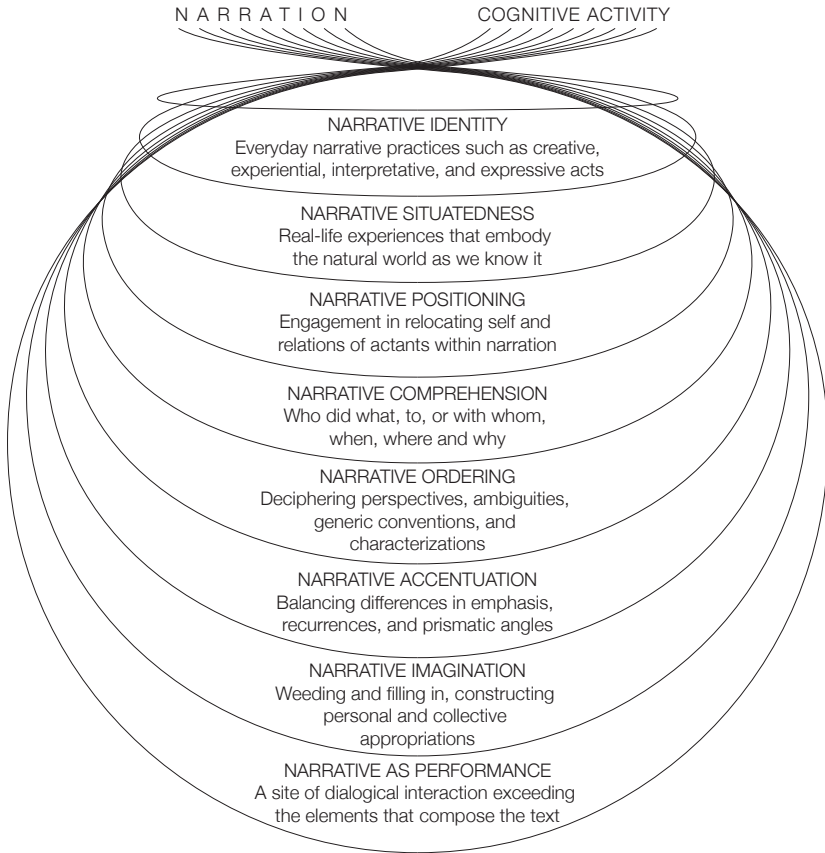


Figure 1: The reading experience as an affective-cognitive blend forming an integrative site where cognitive constructs come into being based on fusion, filling out of schemata and subsequent mental acts that can extend endlessly.

1.1.1 *Focus and Boundaries*

I focus on the Apocalypse from the vantage point of orality and its narrative aspects – aspects often disregarded in favour of a search for theological clarity, dogmatic authority or historical reality. Essential for exploring this line of thought, and for the motivation of the study, has been the orality of the Apocalypse as a textual expression, as I indicate in the Introduction. David Aune rightly notes that authors composed for the ear¹⁷ and refers to orality as the overlooked observation about biblical texts.¹⁸ Today texts from antiquity, such as Greek tragedies and biblical narratives, are read silently and not heard, nor are they viewed, thus the original performative character that constituted the oral-auditory encounter tends to be forgotten.¹⁹ However, it is now commonly accepted that the Apocalypse was written primarily to be performed for an audience, possibly a hearing-viewing assembly.²⁰ Moreover, the fact that in antiquity texts were usually read aloud and listened to is a

¹⁷ It has been estimated that, in the first-century Roman Empire, less than 10 per cent of the population were literate, falling to perhaps as low as 3 per cent in Palestine. Bar-Ilan, M. "Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries CE." S. Fishbane and S. Schoenfeld. *Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1992) 46–61; Hezser, C. *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). Bruce Longenecker claims that the expression in Mark 13.14, 'Let the reader understand,' indicates that, in general, reading was not individual. Longenecker, B. W. *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of the New Testament Chain-link Transitions* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005) 49–51.

¹⁸ David Aune notes that, in the ancient world, literature and rhetoric were so closely connected that many modern assumptions about the nature of ancient texts are misleading. Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic* 50.

¹⁹ Considering the background of theatrical performances among the Greek speaking Jewish population, it is plausible to think of the Apocalypse as a similar performance in a Jewish Christian context. Against this backdrop, Ezekiel's Exagoge has been believed to be the earliest Jewish play and has been regarded as a theatrical performance, an internal if not a visualized one. Davies, R. B. "Reading Ezekiel's *Exagoge*: Tragedy, Sacrificial Ritual, and the Midrashic Tradition." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 48 (2008) 396.

²⁰ Rhoads, D. "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36 (2006) 118–33, 164–84; Giles, T. and W. Doan. "Performance Criticism of the Hebrew Bible." *Religion Compass* 2 (2008) 273–86; Hearon, H. and P. Ruge-Jones, eds. *The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media. Story and Performance* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009); Dewey, A. J. "Hearing Voices." Working paper presented to the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media Section (Society Of Biblical Literature), Boston, November 23, 2008.

notion that has gained renewed attention.²¹ It is possible to envision the setting of a performance of the Apocalypse for instance in a communal worship situation.²² What are the clues for coming to grips with the Apocalypse while emphasizing the oral-auricular aspect?²³ Is an expectation of simplicity appropriate? Should a document intended for oral performance be simple in outline to be understood, and remembered to be substantiated?²⁴ These questions cannot be answered directly, due to the focus of this study on experientiality. However, orality, together with visualization, constitute an aspect of the interplay of textual and narratological elements with cognitive frames, and actualize the reading/listening experience. Consequently, this raises awareness of the anticipated self-referential world of experiencing narrative, in literary, oral and visual terms. In addition, referentiality – the bearings of the personal concepts of the reader/narratee on the text – allows me

²¹ Robert Culley gives due attention to the oral trait in the forwarding of traditions. Culley, R. C. "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies." *Oral Tradition* 1 (1986) 30–65. However, to recognize oral tradition behind the text is not quite the same as to focus on its internal composition. Then again, literary considerations tend to propose that texts are more likely coincident with the telling of the story than with a conscious desire to follow a design. Nevertheless, for understanding the organization of the Apocalypse, I make no attempt to separate written from oral components, as there does not appear to be agreement over what should be classified as a technique of literature and what that of rhetoric. Smith, S. A *Lion with Wings: A Narrative-Criticism Approach to Mark's Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 49.

²² Tavo, F. "The Structure of the Apocalypse. Re-Examining a Perennial Problem." *Novum Testamentum* 47 (2005) 56–7. In line with Paul's attestation in 1Cor 14.26, ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, the Apocalypse has been regarded as a liturgy of a community. Filho, J. "The Apocalypse of John as an Account of a Visionary Experience." *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 25 (2002) 213–34; Barr, D. "Blessed Are Those Who Hear: John's Apocalypse as Present Experience." L. Elder and E. Malbon, eds. *Biblical and Humane: A Festschrift for John Priest* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1996) 87–103.

²³ James Dunn warns against underestimating the difficulties a mindset formed in a long established literary culture has to undergo while trying to shift to an oral mindset. The oral medium handles information differently from the written one. Dunn, J. D. G. "Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition." *New Testament Studies* 49 (2003) 139–75. See also Kelber, W. H. *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1996) xv–xvi, and Ong, W. J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1988) 12–3.

²⁴ Tavo claims that the intelligibility of an artefact for its hearers necessitates that the Apocalypse should be uncomplicated in structure and straightforward in content. Tavo, F. "The Structure of the Apocalypse" 56–7. However, Tavo does not provide evidence to validate his assumption.

to point out how the reading gains depth with each new encountered reading/narrating/listening situation.

Another principle that lies at the core of this study is that the artefact and the reader/listener assemblies communicate through multiple readings. Consequently, the reading experience of the Apocalypse constitutes shared communication with the text and about the text. In addition, this implies a shared consciousness about reality and counter-reality, and revolving communication through literary, oral and visual expressions. These issues are extensively discussed in Chapter Three. At this stage, it may suffice to bring to attention my interest in exploring how concepts are conveyed from one source to another – from one medium to another. There remains a fundamental question: is theorist an advocate of, for example, new criticism, reader response, phenomenology, or social constructionism? There is a vast assortment of schools of thought around communication, in which plurality of experience and situatedness of knowledge are considered. Empiricism, romanticism, materialism, psychoanalysis, and cognitive psychology, among others, all have been used as rationale for, and to describe the natural and creative activity of, communicating through narrative. But we are still trying to find out how it is possible to convey spiritual meaning and revelation from one source to another, from one medium to another?

As an exegete interested in the interpretative relevance of narrative, I build on the argument that insistence on searching for a unifying principle can reduce the potential insights to be gained from the literary, oral and experiential expressions of the narrated accounts. The lack of unifying ideology such as eschatology may be seen as a 'subjectivist enterprise',²⁵ but my assumption is that reader/listeners effortlessly construct concepts, describe situations, recognize relationships, form narratives orally, in writing, or even visually, but through the same cognitive processes required to process the sensory input they encounter in interacting with the world. Reader/listeners are not only 'undisturbed recipients' of information, but active participants in the world.

²⁵ Tavo, F. "The Structure of the Apocalypse" 48. See also Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *The Book of Revelation. Justice and Judgment* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985) 22. Susan Gillingham argues that reading, being a subjective process, results in multivalent interpretations the substance of which depends on whether one looks at the text in its historical context, applying the diachronic approach, or in its literary context, using the synchronic one. Gillingham, S. E. *The Image, the Depths and the Surface: Multivalent Approaches to Biblical Study* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 147.

They construct (literary) worlds not by encountering information but through mental representations drawn from real as well as imagined life. As audience, they are an active participants in this construction, they are narratees, they are narrated to and narrated at, and they respond by co-narrating and by narrativizing, creating new literary, real or virtual experiences. Reader/listeners venture beyond the text and accumulate a narrative to explain and predict aspects of the story and the narrating mind they share with the characters in orientating their narrative experience.

What speaks for the situatedness and referentiality of a textual (literary/oral) expression that requires associative resources is a stark functional weakness of its opposite – the ideologically unifying principle. Itemized inventories of information presented in an orderly manner, common to ideological teaching,²⁶ do not evoke experientiality nor create lasting impressions.²⁷ Consequently, in my approach to the Apocalypse from the perspective of cognitive narratology I aim to go beyond classical narratology's fundamental enquiry into the rules of the narrative's textual system. I focus on what are the mental tools, processes and activities that are part of the reader's encounter with the narrative, as he or she constructs meaning.²⁸

One of the interesting findings in cognitive studies is that, at the early stage of an emerging new ideology, the ability to understand and hold mental representations favours analogies encoded in and recalled from the immediate autobiographical memory system of the individual. At the emergence of new ideological movements, people act less upon the teaching they profess and more upon their tacit apprehensions.²⁹ The present study illustrates how the forceful mind-pictures of

²⁶ The experiential system is related to the experience of affect, and operates in a manner that is preconscious, rapid, automatic, effortless, holistic, associative, nonverbal, and minimally demanding of cognitive resources. The rational system operates according to one's understanding of the rules of evidence and logical inference, and is conscious, analytical, affect free and maximally demanding of cognitive resources. Epstein, S. "Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory of Personality." I. B. Weiner, editor-in-chief. *Handbook of Psychology*, vol. 5: T. Millon and M. J. Lerner, eds. *Personality and Social Psychology* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003) 159–84.

²⁷ Fludernik, M. "Chronology, Time, Tense and Experientiality in Narrative." *Language and Literature* 12 (2003) 120.

²⁸ Scholes, R. E., J. Phelan, and R. Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative* 290.

²⁹ A text of this form suggests that we are dealing with early Christianity, not only as a time-frame, but also as a context community, still evolving toward full religious

the Apocalypse have a decisive cognitive appeal to the narratee (the audience that engages in the narrative) and render the content of the text notable and monumental. Readers, narratees, in other words, those who read and listen to the narrative appear to be engaged in a rather different set of activities, different from the mostly expected reading and listening; they contemplate the actions of the characters, experience the stylistic qualities of the writing, and reflect on the feelings evoked among them by the story.³⁰ In short, my work rests on the assumption that an experiential encounter with an imagistically absorbing (oral) narrative experience precedes an analysis³¹ and the search for a symbolic interpretation.³² I describe that moment as awareness of a narrative experience when the reader is still short of material for conceptualization. It is the mental state of that experiential encounter with a textual or oral artefact, preceding analysis, that is mostly overlooked in scholarship, and which I find worth examining.

1.1.2 Task

The analysis will show how the readers' different real-life frames and

self-knowledge. Martin, L. H. "The Promise of Cognitive Science for the Historical Study Of Religions, with Reference to the Study of Early Christianity." P. Luomanen, I. Pyysiäinen, and R. Uro, eds. *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 37–56; Pyysiäinen, I. "Believing and Doing: Ritual Action Enhances Religious Belief." A. W. Geertz and J. S. Jensen, eds. *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture. Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative* (London: Equinox, 2009).

³⁰ Yeshayaha Shen's analysis of the various aspects of an experienced point of the story shows that a probable encounter with an artefact is an all-embracing dialectical interaction between the narration and the reader's own experiences and feelings. Shen, Y. "Evaluation Devices as a Coordinating Mechanism for Story Points." M. Louwerse and W. van Peer, eds. *Thematics: Interdisciplinary Studies* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003) 77–90.

³¹ Readers prefer experience-driven reading to point-driven one, unless analysis is the objective of their activity. Vipond, D. and R. Hunt. "Point-Driven Understanding: Pragmatic and Cognitive Dimensions of Literary Reading." *Poetics* 13 (1984) 261–77; Bloome, D. "Narrative as Text versus Narrative Event and Practice." A. C. Graesser, M. A. Gernsbacher, and S. R. Goldman, eds. *Handbook of Discourse Processes* (Mahwah: Erlbaum, 2003) 290–303.

³² Miall D. S. and D. Kuiken. "What is Literariness? Three Components of Literary Reading." *Discourse Processes* 28 (1999) 121–38; Miall, D. S. and D. Kuiken. "Beyond Text Theory: Understanding Literary Response." *Discourse Processes* 17 (1994) 337–52; Miall, D. S. and D. Kuiken. "A Feeling for Fiction: Becoming What We Behold." *Poetics* 30 (2002) 221–41.

their preferred reading strategies result in different particular readings. This will explicate my proposal to conceive of the narrative experience as a mental model that the reader construes in the reading process through a combination of information from textual and mental sources. In this process of experience construction, mechanisms of social cognition also play a crucial role, even though special conditions prevail due to the particular textual sources of information and elements of delivery – whether formal or not – inducing emotional parameters and transforming the reader/listener into a narratee of situations, emotions, and (imagistic) characters.

Passages from the Apocalypse have been selected for the analysis that have a topical, structural, imagistic, metaphorical, or situational relationship with each other. They either are linked or contrasted to another or they annul each other through temporal or spatial impossibility. Their situational and temporal connection can be defined by closeness or detachment, possible chronology or failed chronology, they can span from simultaneous happenings to movements overarching world history and beyond. The selected passages exemplify how understanding that emerges from the reading/listening experience is of a different quality when compared with that derived through other approaches. Drawing on results from cognitive science and social sciences, from research in discourse processing, as well as from phenomenological inquiry into otherness as source of meaning, this study intends to capture the quality of the text-reader interaction more variedly than the text-oriented, structuralist approaches have been able to do.³³

Following the exposition of interpretative and cognitive narratology perspectives my analysis works towards an alignment of the description of textual properties and narratological functions with underlying social and cognitive parameters which mainly relate to the workings of cognition and emotion in text understanding. This leads to a set of questions guiding the analytical part of the project. The questions introducing Part Two surface from my attempt to explore the Apocalypse as a text disrupting narrative with structures and even realistic frames. What emerges by applying the cognitive narratological approach, based on Monika Fludernik's work, pivots around the way the narratee deals with a plurality of identities and positions. Consequently, the functions

³³ Zwaan, R. A. *Aspects of Literary Comprehension. A Cognitive Approach* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993) 8.

I examine illustrate how technical narratological features may carry relevant meaning. Such formal make-up and functional workings include gaps or pauses, deictic expressions, alternations, relational alterity, and conceptual blending. These are additional to more commonly used categories that focus on positioning, plot, and structure in narrative understanding. Methodologically (speaking), the points of reference for the experience construction move around categories such as timing, selection, sequence and duration.

A functional analysis of technical features influencing the process of reading offers a cognitive perspective to existing narratological parameters. Generally, the task is to contribute to an understanding of how in a dynamic processing reader strategies interact with the successive textual presentation and association apparatus. This dynamic process mounts into a story that is experienced through the textual and mental worlds combined. The analysis will show how the alignment between reader and text appears, above all, as a dynamic process encompassing several functional and meaning-giving features of alterity ('otherness') in the emerging story.

More specifically, I build on the assumption that understanding requires forming some kind of 'mind', or simply a narrative alertness, that alternatively attributes dispositions and motivations to imagistic and other events. I regard this as necessary to forming expectations and responding emotionally to the text, which are crucial qualities for the reading of the Apocalypse. The analysis illustrates how all this happens through a complex interaction within the framework of cognitive and narratological parameters. I examine the manner in which these parameters intersect in the reader's encountering the text, what it appears to be – in its genre – and what it says, what he or she knows about it, its characters and their acts, and how he or she interacts with the narrative: the interplay between these and what he or she knows about the world in general, about people, beliefs and practices, expectations and desires, and their opposites. Methodologically, my assumption is that the technical features I analyse are valid for both original and contemporary readers, as shared elements in the experience of reading.³⁴

³⁴ As readers have different understanding of life, depending on their life-experiences, the personalized constructs of the text are inevitably individual. Herman, D. "Hypothetical Focalization." *Narrative 2* (1994) 234–5.

1.2 SOME DEFINITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Artefact. I refer to the Apocalypse as an artefact, and only occasionally do I use the terms artefact and narrative interchangeably. This is because ‘narrative’ does not refer to text only but to the representation in the mind and to the experience it evokes. Artefact corresponds to the text of the Apocalypse, to the extent that it has an acknowledged shape, a temporal and spatial existence established by performance, distribution, and criticism. Thus, narrative study is a study of the experience with that artefact.

Cognitive approach. I do not propose to analyse the author’s contributions to the structure of the text. I explore the narrative artefact from the point of view of readers. I elucidate what effects their engagement with a revelation in its narrative, story-like, imagistic form has on them and their respective audiences. The outlook of another world challenging existing perceptions compounds the complexity of known reality. These involving encounters are also invitations to participate in a narrated experience with the ‘other’ as God’s world.³⁵ Encountering a textually expressed narrative is a process in which textual information interacts with the reader’s knowledge structures and with cognitive procedures. Nevertheless, in literary text-analysis the constraints and openings for narrative understanding arising from the interactive nature of dynamic reading/listening processes are not widely acknowledged. Such attention to the dynamism of interaction is not the rule. Textual analyses tend to highlight the non-dynamic structure of a text rather than elucidate its discursive and cognitive parameters of possibilities in narrative experience.

Reader. Based on theoretical assumptions, I use ‘reader’ in a more comprehensive – and therefore less specific – sense than ‘reader’ in ordinary narrative theories. Instead of defining just one specific ‘reader’ – whether ‘implied’, ‘ideal’, ‘well-informed’, ‘privileged’, ‘innocent’, or any other – I have chosen to use an overarching concept that encompasses both ancient and modern readers. The reader function is determined partly by the very text of the Apocalypse, e.g. by the pauses the reader senses in the text, and partly by links to the general cognitive

³⁵ Fiddes, P. “Story and Possibility: Reflections on the Last Scenes of the Fourth Gospel and Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.” G. Sauter and J. Barton, eds. *Revelation and Story: Narrative Theology and the Centrality of Story* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 45.

constraints in the reading process, such as elements that hinder communication. Both shared and distinguishing features come to the fore when a reader or listener takes on the active role of the narratee – the you to whom the Apocalypse is addressed. The comprehensive function of the generic reader that I am suggesting is to help grasp how the cognitive realm of each participating or potential reader is to be understood broadly. However, the convergence which creates meaning can not be pinpointed precisely; in Iser's words, it 'must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader.'³⁶

Narratee. In meaning creation, focus on the narratee implies textual-experiential context. What is implied is that narratees attempt to re(-)cognize texts in terms of a real-life telling, experiencing, or viewing. They also try to reconcile inconsistencies in the narrative in terms of actions and event structures.³⁷ Text-internal narratee is a character listening to the words of other characters. Interacting with other characters in the narrative is a process that constructs character subjectivity. Text-external narratee is a reader or listener interacting with the narrative. This process strengthens the reader's subject position. For the most part, this is an experience accompanying the act of meaning creation. The concept of narratee derives from the assumption that a text comes alive with its readers, its narratees, who through accumulative narrativization assume a virtual function of co-writers, both from a historical, sociocultural and hermeneutical point of view.³⁸ Thus, the narratee is not conceptualized through a text-internal or historic-critical approach alone and does not need to be fixed within a determined context, whether textual or experiential.

Narrator. My main concept of narrator is described in the detailed discussion of the Apocalypse as two distinct narrator voices, or double narrator, the I-narrator, or narrating I, and a co-narrator. In the study of the Apocalypse as a reading/hearing/narrative experience, the concept of narrator includes the person who plays a role in the development of the experience, any character who could bring together

³⁶ Iser, W. *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) 274.

³⁷ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 34.

³⁸ Sauter, G. "Scriptural Faithfulness Is Not a Scriptural Principle." G. Sauter and J. Barton, eds. *Revelation and Story: Narrative Theology and the Centrality of Story* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 7–28.

situation and emotion. By the same token, it is the narrative experience and its affirmation of real-life frames that build a narrator at a specific pace and rhythm in the narrative and in the text-reader interplay. It is assumed that the experience of reading builds on how the narrating roles assume the role of recounting with respect to the narratee. Just as there is a double narrative in the text-internal level of telling, there is also a double narrator at reader-text level of communication. With the double narrative, the reader as co-narrator is allowed to explore the past as well as the present, providing insights into the present that cannot come from the I-narrator.

Narrative positioning. Narrative positioning occurs through deictic expressions such as 'I', 'you', and 'him', functioning as 'empty' pronouns with ambivalent reference. Referential openness with regard to the usage of deictic words allows participation of the reader in positioning the characters in relation to each other. When the pronouns are filled with a reference to an acting character or image this allows positioning, and re-positioning of characters and action, both text-internally and text-externally. In addition, the reader engages in positioning himself or herself towards the narrative situation. Multiple meanings conveyed by the way the story is constructed draw attention to how 'positioning of the self' takes place. For example, deictic expressions, or unbridgeable gaps, are used to invite the reader to join in. This especially concerns the deictic pronoun 'you', which the reader can experience as an invitation, and which he or she fills with a real-life frame. Another way to induce an experience is through the 'I' mode of reporting, which results in a positioning the reader as a witness. This, correspondingly, gives the hearer less opportunity to engage through self-positioning. As a result of constant shifts in the actants' identity throughout the Apocalypse as well as in the reflective consciousness of the reader, a certain degree of difficulty arises in the positioning characters in time and space.³⁹ For the reader, it is difficult to orientate according to characters that are not fixed. Consequently, reading the Apocalypse entails an experience of oscillation in positioning.

Guiding nous. In my theoretical framework, the author is by no means 'dead', but, all the same, my analysis focuses on the narrator-narratee span and leaves the author out of sight. To the extent that the authorial intent does surface in my discussion, I speak of an ordering

³⁹ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 274–7.

sphere of consciousness, the guiding nous. Yet, even here, interplay with the reader's conceptual frames is assumed. An ordering consciousness is an understanding that emerges from classical philosophy, where the invisible consciousness that shapes narratives was first considered. The Stoics are reported to have thought of the nous as the power that endows particular beings with their unique characteristics and abilities.⁴⁰ Philo equates the nous in its guiding function with the divine pneuma.⁴¹ Paul characterized it as the νοῦν Χριστοῦ (1Cor 2.16)⁴² whereas cognitive scientists define it as the mind, the manifestation of the mental processes and structures that underline creative thinking and identify the various properties that constitute creativity.⁴³ This 'guiding nous' is responsible for the literary whole⁴⁴ that the reader apprehends. Here lies the probe for our interpretative capacity as narratees to construct and consume visualizations of alternative, possible worlds. We rely on an ordering sphere of consciousness that dramaturgically directs through visualization corridors that lead to the alternative, possible worlds. We step in by inferring our own conceptual frames, but can enter into the narrative world through alternative possible entry points. In each situated encounter between the reader and the narrative, the guiding nous is embedded in the experience, with a perplexing effect on the narratee. However, the boundary between textual openness and interpretation remains unclear, with 'grand questions' remaining.⁴⁵

Ideological concerns. In this inquiry, I purposefully exclude a pre-occupation with ideological/theological concerns⁴⁶ in this inquiry. Neither is my discussion directed at disassembling traditional ideological

⁴⁰ Menn, S. P. *Plato on God as Nous* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994); Drozdek, A. *Greek Philosophers as Theologians: The Divine Arche* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 239.

⁴¹ See Philo, *De opificio mundi* 35 and *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* 55. Cf. Robertson, D. *Word and Meaning in Ancient Alexandria. Theories of Language from Philo to Plotinus* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) 17-9.

⁴² Strüder, C. W. *Paulus und die Gesinnung Christi: Identität und Entscheidungsfindung aus der Mitte von 1 Kor 1-4* (Dudley: Peeters, 2005) 244-56.

⁴³ Hogan, P. C. *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (London: Routledge, 2003) 59-62.

⁴⁴ Markantonatos, A. *Tragic Narrative: A Narratological Study of Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002) 6.

⁴⁵ Simojoki, A. *Apocalypse Interpreted* 165.

⁴⁶ Assuming that meaning can be extracted from the text itself or from an examination of the contextual and historical circumstances. Carroll, R. P. *Wolf in the Sheepfold: The Bible as Problematic for Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1997) 37.

concepts concerning the Apocalypse. My immediate concern is with finding applicable tools for examining how cognitive parameters contribute to an understanding of the text in the context and process of reading. Generally, because of their need to state a method commensurate with their ideology or some absolute principle, biblical scholars are predisposed to decide cautiously on the use of specific analytical methods. Pascal Boyer and Ilkka Pyysiäinen have drawn attention to what they call 'theologism'⁴⁷ in the narrativizing of biblical texts. I am aware that much of the scholarship on the Apocalypse provides good examples of this tendency, and narrativizing to fill its gaps has been done extensively, as also in this study. However, I try to focus on the 'how' of reading and experiencing the narrative's textual, oral and/or visual expression. Ideological concerns aside, some narratologists may find that I overlook essential narrative components, such as plot and character. Others may even object that an analysis that stops short of a theological engagement is not objective enough. However, my concern is to underscore the awareness that narrativizing brings to the artefact's all-encompassing symbolic networks, theologies and worldviews, elements that could not be grasped apart from an encounter between text and the reader.⁴⁸ There are varieties of positions about what goes on in the mind of the reader and about the ways in which the collaboration between readers, texts and contexts of reading becomes a continuous invention and interpretation of knowledge.⁴⁹ As every reader has a dif-

⁴⁷ This touches the principal question of the possibility of extracting from a textual artefact an ideological or symbolic network apart from the observer. Boyer, P. *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Pyysiäinen, I. *How Religion Works: Towards a New Cognitive Science of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). However, some literary theorists used to promote the idea of autonomist text. Leavis, F. *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation* (New York: G. W. Stewart, 1950); Hirsch, E. *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

⁴⁸ Religious phenomena, including religious texts, should be analyzed as a feature within the process of interpretation as a discursive construction that links individuals to the social, cultural and cosmic order, rather than considered as a timeless self-existing entity. Dubuissou, D. "The Western Construction of Religion." *Religion* 36 (2006) 119–78.

⁴⁹ In the past few decades, biblical studies have increasingly become an interdisciplinary study and the once accepted conclusions of previous scholarship have had to be re-evaluated. Collins, J. J. *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 27–51; Merenlahti, P. *Poetics for the Gospels? Rethinking Narrative Criticism* (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 2005) 99.

ferent understanding about life, about the way things work, and about the relationships between entities, the constructs of the text are inevitably individual.⁵⁰ Once the dependence of the meaning on the reader's interpretive performance has been accepted, it is increasingly difficult to support, at least in its most straightforward form, the notion of extracting out of the text a definitive meaning.

Narratological analysis. This study differs from narrative approaches⁵¹ in biblical scholarship that use structural methods. Structurally oriented narrative readings tend to base the explaining of the text on the assumption that its intelligibility lies in the structural elements of the narrative, which give orientation to the reader.⁵² These approaches emphasize the precise nature of a narrative's structure and language. They aim at settling the narrative plot and at showing how characterization unfolds as a whole, through the development of themes, patterns, motifs, images, and actual words. Formal elements, such as the use of anticipation, flashback, questions, and irony, and the points of view from which it is narrated, focus on the production of the text.⁵³ Structuralistically orientated approaches are typically inductive, moving from the particular to the general, from the individual instance to underlying laws. In my rather deductive narratological approach to the Apocalypse, I methodically touch on those aspects of the text that so

⁵⁰ Herman, D. "Hypothetical Focalization" 234–5.

⁵¹ Petri Merenlahti proposes that narrative criticism should become more inclusive, adopt an integrated approach and engage in hermeneutic reflection and consideration. Merenlahti, P. *Poetics for the Gospels?* 115–8.

⁵² As presented in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's hypothesis of a 'concentric,' 'conic-spiraling' compositional function of the text of the Apocalypse, which means a structuration pointing towards the central theme of the artefact; or, as argued by Nathan Klaus that a literary construction resembling the one applied in the Former Prophets of the Hebrew Scripture 'enables the reader to arrive at a complete understanding and interpretation of the text because the central idea appears in most cases at the climax of the structure.' Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *The Book of Revelation* 172; Klaus, N. *Pivot Patterns in the Former Prophets* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 26. For the importance of structuralism for understanding, see Lindsay, S. A. *Revelation: The Human Drama* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2001) 101–7, and Siew, A. K. W. *The War Between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses* (London: Continuum, 2005) 35–46.

⁵³ Berlin, A. *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983); Bar-Efrat, S. *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989); Rhoads, D., J. Dewey, and D. Michie. *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982); Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2002).

easily defy definition and so readily contradict the revelatory function itself. Mine is a practical demonstration of how the analytical methods and narratological concepts can be used to provide descriptions (and even interpretations) of apocalyptic passages. The legitimacy of this approach depends on the premise that narration, like apocalypticism, transcends time and place, to create experience and produce and communicate personalized meanings. The cross-generic application of narratology to the Apocalypse requires no further justification.

Story and narrative. In literary studies, there is a well-established distinction between story and narrative. In this study, I use the term 'narrative' as a modality, in order to convey the sense story makes to someone in a subject position. A reader in those kinds of circumstances has the ability and the purposefulness to act in the reading process as equal to the text. Narrative alertness, or an interpretative consciousness, as it were, does not limit meaning creation to static categories. It brings out a variety of narrative meanings seen to reside in the formal features, and felt to evoke relevant real-life frames.

Most speakers of English use the word 'story' when referring to the concept of 'narrative.' When English speakers say they have heard a 'good story', they usually are not thinking of the story as separate from the telling of it. When your child asks you to read his or her favourite story he or she often means by that every word on every page, not leaving anything out.⁵⁴ If you do not render the complete script, you are not reading the whole story (cf. Apocalypse 22.19). The reason for the child's devotion to the story's formal reality may not be adherence to the story's truth-value but the desire to uphold the integrity of his/her very own narrative experience that emerges from the story and its variations. However, many theorists have pointed out that it is never possible to arrive at the pure, unmediated story, and each reader's story will be subtly different from every other reader's.⁵⁵ Variations are possible even if the textual elements are the same and the reader is the same. The events may appear unlike, their parts may look different and combine differently, in accordance with the narratee's newly gained insights. Therefore, the events become, as it were, a new story. Paradoxically, the story can be realized in many ways, or reproduced in different

⁵⁴ Abbott, H. P. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 13–20.

⁵⁵ Palmer, A. *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) 18.

media, while remaining the 'same' story.

The distinction between story (the scripted version with its signifiers) and narrative (the story as encountered and related) becomes even clearer as we go on. This vital difference helps understand the way narrative works. The defining feature of narrative as a cognitive modality includes the process of narrativizing the re-represented. Thus, narrative is regarded as a means of making sense of a cluster of confusing experiences and impressions.⁵⁶ Peter Brooks considers the flow of action as an embracing notion for the design and intention of narrating,⁵⁷ whereas Paul Ricoeur defines narrative as a scheme, the intelligible whole governing a succession of events, and thus attributes to narrative an ordering of events, or the accomplishment of agreement over dissonance.⁵⁸ For Ricoeur, to narrate is to explain.⁵⁹ However, there is more to it. The mode of narrating (actualized in accounts, reports, documentaries, or fiction) is commonly used for explaining what has been experienced. Then narration itself, as an expression of human experientiality, is analysed. Paradoxically, to explain the experience, the meaning of the explaining, need not be explanatory, it can be an experience.⁶⁰

To put it simply, narratives often reward virtue and punish wickedness, which speaks for an experience of order. The reader recognizes an

⁵⁶ Literary modes, specifically story and parable, are the basic structures of human knowledge. Fauconnier, G. and M. Turner. "Conceptual Integration and Formal Expression." *Metaphor and Symbol* 100 (1995) 183–203; Turner, M. *The Literary Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Fauconnier, G. *Mapping in Thought and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Fauconnier, G. and M. Turner. "Conceptual Integration Networks." *Cognitive Science* 22 (1998) 133–87; Fauconnier, G. and M. Turner. "A Mechanism for Creativity." *Poetics Today* 20 (1999) 397–418; Turner, M. *Cognitive Dimensions of Social Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Fauconnier, G. and M. Turner. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). For a response, see Hougaard, G. R. "Mental Spaces and Blending in Discourse and Interaction." T. Oakley and A. Hougaard, eds. *Mental Spaces in Discourse and Interaction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008) 247–50.

⁵⁷ Brooks, P. *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985) 12.

⁵⁸ Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, transl. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 56, 178.

⁵⁹ Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative* 1: 148.

⁶⁰ For Kierkegaard, uncertainty of meaning is the meaning. Kierkegaard S. *Fear and Trembling*, H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong, transl. and ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 78. See also Edwards, J. C. *The Plain Sense of Things: The Fate of Religion in an Age of Normal Nihilism* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1997) 59–110.

intrinsic or innate quality in the narrative that conveys a stability that can be trusted: may the guilty be punished, may murderers and tyrants never die of old age and may the villain reap his just rewards, while the hero prospers. Yet, in other respects, narrative is an expression for disconcerting experiences when it remains indifferent to merits and faults, and the motives for conduct contradict each other. In this sense, action depicted in narrative is not self-explanatory. In the Apocalypse, for example, a reader looks for other motivational aspects for action than the self-explanatory. The Beast threatens with sanctions if people do not bow to him, (13.16,17) but so does the righteous side; it threatens with similar retribution those who follow the Beast (14.11). In the narrative, only a few of the figures ultimately have a choice between good and evil, most are what they are from the start, and their fate seems determined (9.20,21; 22.11). Narratives commonly do not give rational reasons as to why things are the way they are. In the Apocalypse, there is no clue as to why the Dragon turned out to be evil, or what the origins of the prostitute might be. As the unknown cannot be rendered, without becoming known and thus losing its mysterious quality, only indirect indication can be provided. Michael Roemer makes a point about the psychological texture that a narrative raises: confronting our fears can free us of them, and facing the unknown can be liberating.⁶¹ For the unknown is less confining than the known, and we may gain hope from a situation that fades into ambiguity and uncertainty.

Deixis and mimesis. The term 'deixis' comes from a Greek word that means 'pointing' and 'indicating'. The adjective deictic has a sense of demonstrative, and refers to spatial-temporal coordinates that are told, or pointed to, in the narrative. While deictic passages 'tell' about the action, mimetic parts narrate it. Mimesis 'represents' the events in a sensible way, making specified settings or situations present, using dialogue, direct speech, inner monologue. Readers as narratees model things and events mentally and locate them somewhere in their inner

⁶¹ Roemer, M. *Telling Stories: Postmodernism and the Invalidation of Traditional Narrative* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995) 49. Gerhard Theissen, in stead, envisions every biblical voice as evoking a counter-voice in an internal dialogue. Theissen, G. *The Bible and Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) 75. According to Yarbrow Collins, the function of the text is to clarify and objectify negative feelings and to distance them from Jesus or God. Yarbrow Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984) 153, 161.

world, experiencing them vicariously.⁶² Narratives provide cognitive maps by alternating showing and telling, both of which support imagistic experiences. In essence, scene and summary⁶³ interlock both deictic and mimetic narrative modes in the Apocalypse. In this way, they deliver into the narrative script a specific series of events containing a certain number of characters, often disrupting the temporality.⁶⁴ Fludernik's model of viewing and experiencing as the basic cognitive 'framing representations' of the 'where' and 'what' in the narrative works with deigesis and mimesis as major dimensions of narrative processing. It is, however, fair to say that there is no definite distinction between telling and showing,⁶⁵ since both are potentially present in the same context and, more often than not, cooperate in reproducing a number

⁶² Mieke Bal points out that readers shape the perceived order of events in the story demonstrated in the deictic passages and on the other hand they organize chronological sequences as a theoretical construction evoked by the mimetic parts following the laws of everyday logic. Bal, M. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 80–99.

⁶³ *Scene*, denoting a temporal equivalence between story and text, is mostly manifested in dialogue. *Summary* designates the acceleration of pace through the textual compression of a given story-period into a relatively condensed statement of its main features. The degree of compression can be variable, thereby producing multiple gradations of acceleration. *Ellipsis* marks an omission at the level of the text, and thus describes the maximum possible speed of narrative acceleration. In ellipsis, zero textual space corresponds to some story duration. *Slowdown* denotes a gradual deceleration of text-time in comparison to the fixed literal flow of story-time. In *pause*, some portion of the text corresponds to zero story duration. Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*, transl. J. E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) 93–112; Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction* 51–6. For the rhythm of narrative, see Bal, M. *Narratology* 99–111.

⁶⁴ A story is expected to be understood chronologically, and taken to mean the linear patterning of events performed by certain agents and linked by particular principles. A cognate distinction between *fabula* (the raw events forming the story) and *sjuzhet* (the texture akin to the Aristotelian *mythos*, the arrangement or structure of incidents) was established by Russian formalism. Pier, J. "On the Semiotic Parameters Of Narrative: A Critique of Story and Discourse." T. Kindt and H. H. Müller. *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003) 73–98. The key feature of narrative text is a tension between *fabula* and *sjuzhet*. Petrain, D. "Moschus' Europa and the Narratology of Ecphrasis." M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, and G. C. Wakker, eds. *Beyond the Canon* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006) 253. The pair *fabula*-*sjuzhet* is sometimes expressed as a contrast between 'story' and 'discourse', or 'story' and 'narration', or temporal and spatial principles of ordering. Bennington, G. *Lyotard: Writing the Event* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) 108.

⁶⁵ Rich, M. "Show is Tell." *Narrative Inquiry* 12 (2002) 405–12.

of events.⁶⁶ This allows for the creation of the multidimensional concept of apocalypticity proposed in this study.

Frames/Scripts. Frames are employed as brackets or boundaries around experiences, in order to grasp better their significance. According to Monika Fludernik, frames refer to knowledge of general domains of experience. Scripts, possibly as narrated accounts, stories from real-life, refer to knowledge of common scenarios, of sequences of events within those domains.⁶⁷ Fludernik redeploys and redefines narrativization as the process through which the reader/narratee finds correspondence between a text read or heard and experience.⁶⁸ Readers approach narratives with some clear expectations and procedures which, even though they vary from reader to reader, have some basic similarities. These 'scripts' are activated by the contexts in which the narratives are encountered; that determines the 'frames of reference' that will delimit scripts. Her cognitive narratology emphasizes the importance of frames, or schemata, as well as the scripts used by the authors and the audiences. Jonathan Culler explains that readers naturalize the texts they are dealing with, by relating the unexpected and unfamiliar to a type of model that is in some sense natural and understandable.⁶⁹ Participating in a revelatory event, which is how the narrative depicts itself, equally necessitates reading techniques and narrative alertness, as do other accounts of literary or oral nature. Readers process strategies – frames, scripts, and preferences – that provide the presuppositions that enable them to create a sense of what the discourse aims at.⁷⁰ They ascribe experiences to the narrated events and tend to ignore the aspects contrary to comprehension.

⁶⁶ Bowman, J. W. "The Revelation to John: Its Dramatic Structure and Message." *Interpretation* 9 (1955) 436–53; Bowman, J. W. *The First Christian Drama*; Blevins, J. *Revelation as Drama* (Nashville: Broadman, 1984).

⁶⁷ Scholes, R. E., J. Phelan, and R. Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative* 290.

⁶⁸ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 96.

⁶⁹ Culler, J. *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975) 137–8.

⁷⁰ Gregory Bateson was among the first to systemize the notion of 'frame' as a defined interpretative context. Bateson, G. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972) 177–92, 222. See also performance as a frame in Austin, J. *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962) 121; Fish, S. *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980) 97–111, and Bauman, R. "Verbal Art as Performance." A. Duranti, ed. *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 165–88.

Experientiality. This is a key concept for the argumentation in this study. For this reason, and for the sake of added clarity, I present here a more extensive introduction to the term. In addition, I try to root its relevance in the specific character of the Apocalypse and give some examples of how real-life frames support experientiality, a meaningful appropriation of the text.

The possibilities rooted in narratives give Michael Roemer reason to argue that they are not necessarily intelligible and often make no logical sense.⁷¹ Though the events in a narrative may follow each other in a plausible causal sequence, they do not necessarily allow for a clear meaning or explanation. This is most evident in narratives typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embody and provide an explanation, reason, or justification for something, such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon. In the initial experience, the succession of events may appear meaningless. In the reader's experience, the divine may seem inconsistent, in the relationship to humankind, unpredictable in malice as in kindness.⁷² This observation leads Kirsten Nielsen to remark that, in a religious narrative such as the Apocalypse, the plot is not intelligible: the narrative is predicated on an all-knowing, all-powerful and just God but the evil that sets off the action contradicts the narrative's premise.⁷³ The existence of evil in a world created and ruled by a just deity is not accessible to human reason. Thus, narration and myth may create a sensation of understanding the universe, yet it is only a short-lived impression.⁷⁴ Our awareness of the alternative scenarios, simultaneously suggested by the narration, constantly challenges this understanding, even when logical links are implied.⁷⁵ The reader always sees

⁷¹ Roemer makes the point that narrative is primarily an experience in time. Roemer, M. *Telling Stories* 41.

⁷² Moyise, S. "Does the Lion Lie down with the Lamb?" S. Moyise, ed. *Studies in the Book of Revelation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2001) 182; Barr, D. "The Lamb Who Looks Like a Dragon? Characterizing Jesus in John's Apocalypse." D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse. Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 205–20.

⁷³ Nielsen, K. "How to Read an Apocalypse. Deconstruction and Reconstruction. A Response to Professor Geert Hallbäck's Paper." *Studia Theologica* 47 (1993) 101–2.

⁷⁴ Levi-Strauss, C. *Myth and Meaning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979) 17.

⁷⁵ Leibniz, G. "On the Radical Origination of Things." L. E. Loemker, ed. *G. W. Leibniz Philosophical Papers and Letters* (Dordrecht: Kluwert Academic Publishers, 1989) 487; Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 269. According to Wittgenstein, 'It

only fragmented aspects of the whole⁷⁶ and constructs the experience by means of structures acquired earlier. This provides a dynamic interpretation basis, since scripts are ways of joining existing knowledge with new data.⁷⁷ The sentences 'Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb came, and his woman made herself ready' (19.7,8) demonstrate how a text becomes a story when readers make connections to their personal script or to what Monika Fludernik describes as real-life frames. We know how weddings are organized and prepared, and this is the imagistic story we experience.⁷⁸

The Apocalypse visualizes performed or observed actions. When it portrays the intrusion of incidents into a state of affairs, it also embraces the protagonists' reactions to those developments, whether the interference originated from outside of the characters or by their own intervention. It appears that one of the issues the Apocalypse attempts to explore is the difficulty of knowing.⁷⁹ I favour the idea that the narrative setting of the Apocalypse, which leaves the narratee in some ambiguity about its narrative intentions, induces a questioning mindset that eventually extends as far as one's own intentions. The super-human elements complicate the reflection and play a key role in the form of the presentation.

Paradoxical experience is embedded in narrative. Does the known outcome of the Apocalypse transform the fearful and uncertain into the familiar? Knowing that the faithful will survive and take part in a spectacular royal wedding does not, however, familiarize or tame the supernatural powers. Without the majestically visualized supernatural powers the fearful would perish, yet the narrative does not account for persistent evil in the Dragon. The assurance of a happy conclusion fails to dissipate the sense of human helplessness and marginality that pervades the narrative, though it may make it easier for human actants

is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists.' Cited in Megill, A. *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 170.

⁷⁶ Further on, Roman Ingarden points out that experience can subsist only as something for someone, for an experiencing 'I. Ingarden, R. *On the Motives that Led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975) 21.

⁷⁷ Herman, D. "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology." *PMLA* 112 (1997) 1046–59.

⁷⁸ For a definition of 'imagistic,' a term used more than eighty times in this study, see n. 19 page 8 of this book.

⁷⁹ Yarbrow Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 19–21.

to face them.

The active involvement of the narratee is illustrated by a seemingly evident incident from the Apocalypse. In the opening scene, the character John hears a voice from behind him. He turns and sees something he describes as a figure having eyes like a flame of fire, feet glowing like bronze in a furnace, a voice as loud as rushing waters, and a mouth from which appears a sword instead of a tongue. The reference to stars in one hand and a face as bright as the sun might create an association with luminary size, yet the being is not necessarily colossal. After all, the figure walks among lamp stands and approaches John reaching out at shoulder height, while providing friendly assurance: '[It's me – you know], the first, the last, the one who died but lives.' (1.17b–19a)

John falls like dead at the glowing feet, but how do we know that this yielding is a sign of reverence rather than a symptom of weakness overcoming him, a heart failure perhaps, caused by the forceful spectacle? (1.10–16) The gesture can be interpreted in different ways, yet a tentative reader might claim that if we were to divert from the assumption of a harmonious encounter, and if physiological malfunction had been the reason for John's falling as dead, the Apocalypse would tell us so. On the contrary, even when the immediate context around the incident mentions fear (1.17, μή φοβοῦ) and the spectacle holds the keys of both death and Hades (1.18), these fearful symbols do not disturb the impression of a reassuring encounter. Therefore, we experience that John's body language shows worship, awe, and wonder, not bodily weakness. This is also because of the fact that the knowledgeable narratee is instantly reminded of similar encounters, as in Daniel (Dan 10.8–10) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1.28). In experiencing the narrative, much depends on getting the emotional undertones of the scene right. If the narrative fails to explicitly articulate another frame (for example, physical collapse), we are inclined to read a character's body language as indicative of the thoughts and feelings that we as readers or narratees experience are connected to the narrative situation.⁸⁰

This assumption is in line with cognitive studies. Whether conscious or not, our default rendering of narrated situations reflects to us the character's state of mind, and every account that we read reinforces our

⁸⁰ Zunshine, L. "Theory of Mind and Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness." *Narrative* 11 (2003) 270–91; Zunshine, L. "Theory of Mind and Fictions of Embodied Transparency." *Narrative* 16 (2008) 66–92.

tendency to draw conclusions of this nature first.⁸¹ Although this may come across as an obvious observation we need to ask why the script of the Apocalypse seeks to involve us in this way, to occupy us with processes familiar to our own life experience, while the chosen setting is at the same time so outlandish? The Apocalypse appears to use the utterances and body language of its characters to express a variety of lifelike incidents familiar from our own lives. In so doing, it is also able to explore several thematic issues through experientiality: the nature of identity, the intensity of life, its chaos, its beauty, its pain, its ordinariness, its strangeness, its value.

Apocalypticity. I approach the Apocalypse equally as medium and content. An assessment of different reading paradigms used for coming to grips with the Apocalypse hints towards a medium, a cognitive frame of 'apocalypticity' that acknowledges the narrative as experientially oriented reading. The experience is not the same for everyone, since, as 'subjects' of meaning-making involvements, all readers are ultimately subjective. Apocalypticity represents a prismatic medium for giving readers an experience of the world using the pull of an imagistic mode of narrating. In inhabiting the imagistic world of the Apocalypse, each reader, taking on the active role of narratee, is part of constructing both a personal and collective, sacred and secular appropriation of the artefact. However, compositional elements of the Apocalypse, such as narrative eccentricities, a particular combination of distinctive themes, or the form of visionary appropriation, which are used to delineate a genre, do not amount to 'apocalypticity' as the medium perceived by the reader. In reading the Apocalypse, the reader retains a construed consciousness impacted by the grandeur of expanded worldviews within an imagistic and otherworldly reality. My assumption is that the reading experience of the Apocalypse creates an alternative form of aesthetic receptivity coupled with an alternative

⁸¹ Patrick Hogan argues that, in literature, there are profound, extensive, and surprising universals bound up with no less profound, extensive, and surprising universals in emotion. He maintains that debates over the cultural specificity of emotion have been misdirected because they have largely ignored a vast body of data that bears on the way various cultures imagine and experience emotion reflected in literature. Hogan, P.C. *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Stories are built on cross-culturally shared emotional frames. Kövecses, Z. *Language, Mind, and Culture: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 88–90.

form of narrative construction and appropriation.

1.3 MODALITIES OF READING

The readers' engagement with texts is puzzling, lively, and conflictual. To be sure, there is, in reading, a wide range of modalities. There is the modal of instability, which is conditioned by what Ernstpeter Mauer describes as a wealth of indeterminacy and plurality inbuilt in the text. In this study, the interest in the text is in how its plurality enables new engagements in reading, how it makes possible distinctive and yet varying experiences and how its audience – as participants – has narrative freedom to interact and tell, then re-tell, and experience again and in new ways.⁸²

A preoccupation with the ownership of the text and its text-internal structure as fundamental vehicles towards an elemental meaning⁸³ does not favour views in which the reader takes a single stance when reading.⁸⁴ The reader/listener of this analysis, for example, by choosing to become a narratee opts for a participatory engagement with the textual artefact. Accordingly, his or her reading process becomes a personal envisionment, a narrativization or participation.⁸⁵ In practice, the text draws a response from the reader as participant.⁸⁶

Theoretical monists like Stanley Fish carry this notion a step further, arguing that the text is the product of the reader. What the text evokes in

⁸² Mauer, E. "Reading the Bible Theologically." G. Sauter and J. Barton, eds. *Revelation and Story: Narrative Theology and the Centrality of Story* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 76.

⁸³ In biblical scholarship, the examination of the text has commonly been supposed to be primordial. Fowler, R. "Who is 'the Reader' in Reader-Response Criticism?" 9–10.

⁸⁴ Louise Rosenblatt argues that what the reader elicits from the text generates receptivity to ideas, overtones and attitudes. This can be considered as alterations in certain areas of memory, a stirring up of reservoirs of experience, knowledge and feeling. As the reading proceeds, attention is fixed on reverberations or implications resulting from fulfilment or frustration of those expectations. Rosenblatt, L. M. *Literature as Exploration*; Rosenblatt, L. M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* 54.

⁸⁵ Habermas, J. *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993) 13.

⁸⁶ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, objecting to a universalistic subject model in biblical exegetical contexts, supports the view of reader participation. Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: Decentering Biblical Scholarship." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988) 3–17.

the reading experience combined with the participation by the reader is, in fact, the meaning of the text, in other words, a meaningful narrative experience.⁸⁷ Jonathan Culler, commenting on Stanley Fish, affirms that texts are products of interpretive principles brought to bear by the reader.⁸⁸ Norman Holland, in turn, emphasizes that the reader learns things about himself when reading. He goes on to reject, and rightly so, the notion that reading is a plain response to a stimulus.⁸⁹ Within this discussion, Wolfgang Iser reluctantly accepts the expression 'response' for the German term 'Wirkung', which comprises both the effect of and the response to texts.⁹⁰

Monika Fludernik notes that the cognitive mechanisms utilized in processing information about human thoughts and feelings are constantly on the alert, checking out their environment for clues that fit their input conditions. The example: 'I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll' (5.4) contains material designed to help us experience the behaviour of a person we believe capable of a rich array of intentional stances. Literature pervasively capitalizes on and stimulates the mind's reading mechanisms, as though we were dealing with people, even though as reader/narratees we remain aware that we are dealing with an artefact.⁹¹

1.3.1 *Realist and Non-realist Relation to the Other*

Realism asserts that fixed events precede their narrative representation.⁹² By examining experientiality as the readiness to experience through a literary encounter, we are prompted to question the realist

⁸⁷ Fish, S. *Is There a Text in This Class?* 25.

⁸⁸ Culler, J. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) 72.

⁸⁹ Holland, N. *The Critical I* 226.

⁹⁰ Iser, W. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) ix.

⁹¹ Wallace, M. *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986) 120.

⁹² Gadamer, H.-G. *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975) 300. To represent an experience meaningfully may be an important aim of art (e.g. the art of experience). A work of art may be inspired by an experience, and may be intended to represent an experience. In some cases, the truth of a work of art may be determined by how accurately or correctly it represents an experience. Thus, a work of art may have its being as a form of representation. Gadamer, H.-G. *Truth and Method* 118.

frame of meaning creation.⁹³ Fludernik suggests that narratives use the same cognitive principles of organization we use in our everyday life.⁹⁴ Consequently, the narrativization of the text draws on the readers' and listeners' experience as an initial frame in the construction of reality. Roland Barthes similarly proposes that readers make sense of stories by drawing on what he calls a stereotypic knowledge of human experiences.⁹⁵ Consequently, reading is flavoured with plurality, multiple meanings and connotations embedded in any given text.⁹⁶ Similarly, Marie-Laure Ryan's theory verifies that readers eliminate conflicts between wished-for possible worlds and the text's actual worlds. Moreover, Jerome Bruner⁹⁷ argues that narrative enables the ongoing construction of social realities, not just post-hoc representations of them. Amos Wilder further comments that visionary narratives are not just aesthetic; they also engage us.⁹⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins compares them to poetry, which not only describes but also interprets aspects of reality, both expressing feelings and creating them.⁹⁹ This engagement matters because the experience affects the reader's life, since a biblical narrative is considered authoritative.¹⁰⁰ The Apocalypse creates a particularly strong engagement even within the biblical framework, because it cannot be reduced to descriptive, factual information. A function of the Apocalypse appears to be high engagement with the reader and a

⁹³ Ankersmit argues that a narrated experience, even when referring to an actuality, always contains an element of recognition, that is, narrativizing. Ankersmit, F. *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) 152.

⁹⁴ Fludernik, M. *The Fictions of Language*; Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*; Fludernik, M. "Beyond Structuralism in Narratology" 83–96.

⁹⁵ Barthes, R. *S/Z: An Essay* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974) 204.

⁹⁶ According to Roland Barthes, all narratives share structural features that each narrative weaves together in different ways. Despite differences between individual narratives, every narrative employs five master codes: the hermeneutic, symbolic, proairetic and cultural or reference codes, and the signifying code. They all affect reading, which, in turn, causes the reader to traverse, intersect, stop and plasticize what he or she has read, according to systems of ideology, presumed genre classifications, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages, and criticism that reduces the plurality of entrances. Barthes, R. *S/Z* 5. For discussion on Barthes' codes, see Hawkes, T. *Structuralism and Semiotics* (London: Routledge, 2003) 86–99.

⁹⁷ Bruner, J. "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1991) 1–21.

⁹⁸ Wilder, A. N. *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Lima: Academic Renewal Press, 2001) 79.

⁹⁹ Yarbro Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 144–5.

¹⁰⁰ O'Leary, S. *Arguing the Apocalypse* 36–42, 197–8.

capacity to motivate, even to persuade him or her.¹⁰¹

The narrative of the Apocalypse, even though carried out in a mythopoetic language evoking imaginative participation,¹⁰² concurrently renders real-life experience: Administrators turn out to be liars (2.2), friends are slanderous (2.9), and there are elements of a cognitive dissonance within the community (2.14), sexual immorality (2.20) and tests of loyalty (3.8). The world of agony and injustice, the conglomeration of good and bad, just and unjust, faithful and unfaithful, is recognizable. It is predominantly apprehended through experientiality and vivid imagination. The narration involves both realist and antirealist opposites without being reducible to either extreme. In the course of the narrative, the agents of the storyworld of the Apocalypse become, in a sense, more or less familiar to us. Indeed, though the awareness of dealing with a narrative may open a gap between the characters of the narrative and the narratee, the insights the reader/narratee gains into the motives of their behaviour, conflicts and contradictions in it bridge the distance between the two worlds.¹⁰³

The narratee joins a community in the narrated world, in defiance of locality and time. To feel separate from the narrated place and matrix is worrisome for the reader, yet the narrative revokes that tendency as it places and connects. The 'otherness' experienced in a reading of a narrative takes shape in the relationship to the hero. The vision of a heavenly hero may be representative of how bravely the secrets of tacit knowledge are faced and challenged: A ruler of the kings of the

¹⁰¹ Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *The Book of Revelation* 183.

¹⁰² Thus, the narrative does not merely reflect life in its various forms, but plays a part in shaping reality. Linguists Sapir and Whorf formulated this in the 1940s: language shapes the perception of reality as much as reality shapes language. Whorf, B. L. *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, ed. J. B. Carroll (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1956); Frank, F. W. et al. *Language, Gender, and Professional Writing: Theoretical Approaches and Guidelines for Nonsexist Usage* (New York: Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession, The Modern Language Association of America, 1989) 3.

¹⁰³ For Søren Kierkegaard, the object of cognition does not exist independently of the knower, but is something internal to the consciousness of the individual. Kierkegaard, S. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, transl. and ed. A. Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 53. However, this does not mean commitment to antirealism. The implication is a contrast between the kind of knowing which has a realistic object, real-life frames, and knowing which is essentially subjective, experiential. Avis, P. *God and Creative Imagination. Metaphor, Symbol and Myth in Religion and Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999) 144–53.

earth and of the celestial forces (1.5; 19.11–16), a human with an extra-terrestrial appearance (1.13–17), descriptions such as faithful, just, worthy and all-knowing, one shunning adoration and identifying with the lowly (19.10; 22.9). Comprehension hinges on metaphor and simile, which point to the experience or an encounter with him. This is true beyond all limits, even beyond death (2.1, holding stars in the hand; 2.8, dies and comes to life; 2.12, sword in the mouth; 2.18, eyes like flames; 3.7, what is opened cannot be shut, and what is shut cannot be opened; 3.14, beginning of creation). In addition, a twelve-fold name underlines the multiplicity of the hero's role.¹⁰⁴

Interplay between the reader and the narrative takes place in connection with the antagonist: the reader is part of the nations of the world (1.7). In life, there is loss and gain (2.4), indifference towards peers (2.14), indulgence in indiscriminative behaviour (2.20), relentless falling short of ideals (3.1.2), self-sufficiency (3.17), obstinacy (9.20,21), mischievousness (11.10), and deceptiveness (13.3). We can be tarnished (14.4), untrustworthy (14.5) and irreverent (16.9), as well as imprudent (17.8), haughty and arrogant (18.7). What really counts is the meeting of basic needs (18.11–16; cf. 7.16). Spectacular events intrigue us (19.20), and we take a leery attitude to authoritarianism (22.18,19). The fatalism of the rebuked rises from real-life experience: they believe that nothing can change that which cannot be changed (9.20).

Thus, experience remains a composition of projections of the whole world rather than being a simple delineation of a few events in succession, subsumed under the umbrella of a plot, even a cosmic warfare. Although human experience typically embraces goal-oriented behaviour and activity, with its reaction to obstacles encountered on the way, the trait of forming a sequence, even if it provides cause-and-effect patterns of interpretation, holds little or no interest as narrative.¹⁰⁵ Sudden transfers to heavenly settings, such as 'God's shrine in heaven was opened, and within his shrine was seen the ark of his covenant' (11.9),

¹⁰⁴ First and Last (2.8); Son of God (2.18); The Testimony (3.14); Lion of Judah (5.5); Root of David (5.5); Lamb (5.6); Master (6.9); Faithful and True (19.11); The Word of God (19.13); Alpha and Omega (22.13); Jesus (22.16); Bright Morning Star (22.16). Graham Ward points out that signs and things are repositioned endlessly. The things the signs signify are set in a continuous play in ever changing relationships. Ward, G. "Allegoria: Reading as a Spiritual Exercise." G. Sauter and J. Barton, eds. *Revelation and Story: Narrative Theology and the Centrality of Story* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 99–126.

¹⁰⁵ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 29.

seem to reduce the climactic effect near the end of the book.¹⁰⁶ The traditional chronological approach of sequential and perceived purposeful development toward an end, the study of the ends or final causes as related to the evidence of design or purpose exhibited in a phenomenon is, in a way, an experiential blank, since the goals of the agents do not enter the picture.

Action, situations and motivational factors, which define an event, constitute only a minimal frame for the mind to produce an experience deriving from a real-life incident – a cognitive process depicted as experientiality. In a sense, the narrative is very much a presence, and it is produced through the mediating function of consciousness. The mere sentence ‘The dragon saw that it had been thrown to the earth’ (12.13) constitutes a brief narrative, although more situations would have to be provided to flesh it out into a story about the dragon, a story about somebody encountering the dragon, or a story about the dragon’s endeavours. To the extent that we encounter a setting and an anthropomorphic character alongside the zoomorphic, a narrative starts to emerge, a world in which human consciousness and action with cosmic ramifications are implicitly suggested. Narrative thus involves the quasi-mimetic evocation of real-life experience,¹⁰⁷ which is established in the process of growing awareness.¹⁰⁸

We come to know primary figures, pictures, and schemata,¹⁰⁹ which constantly influence our field of vision and our world of imagination. These signs and systems are organized to make human communication possible. Through the interaction of various communicative systems the raw data of the world, our observations of actions and facts are then contained in a meaningful network of relations and in a purposeful process. The use of symbolic systems provides a specific vision of life and of the world. To experience, through a system of symbolic values, the world meaningful inevitably means creating a subconscious framework within which to live and think.

¹⁰⁶ This verse can be seen as a *story* in the historical sense of a ‘fabula’, in line with the events-in-succession theory of narrative.

¹⁰⁷ Fludernik, M. *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* 12.

¹⁰⁸ Fludernik, M. *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* 36.

¹⁰⁹ Rohrer, T. “Image Schemata in the Brain.” B. Hampe and J. Grady, eds. *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005) 165–96.

1.3.2 *A Virtual Text*

The very process of making sense of our encounter with a literary artefact appears to be grounded in our ability to invest characters with potential for a variety of thoughts, feelings, and desires, and, consequently, to look for evidence that allows us to presume their feelings, and thus to envisage their actions.¹¹⁰ This leads us to observe a further issue relevant to our reading process, which links to the previous discussion of frames of alterity. Mieke Bal points out that, in realist terms, narrative seems to be determined at its referential level, considering narrator and characters as real people, even though, in essence, they are 'paper beings'.¹¹¹ This observation is significant for understanding the reading process as less referential than what many biblical scholars are inclined to acknowledge. Again, according to Bal, structuralists are not willing to accept the assumption that the one who speaks (in the narrative) is not the one who writes (in real-life), and whoever writes reports or tells (in the narrative) is not the same person who is (in real-life). There is more to experiencing the characters than the commonly used qualitative distinction between flat and rounded characters, or between real characters and 'paper beings' without flesh and blood.¹¹² The entire mass of information presented in the text has bearing to the readers' real-life frames, even though readers may attempt to restrict themselves to the limitations of the text in the narrative. When cognitive scientists turn to literary examples to illustrate our ability to invest characters in a narrative with minds of their own and our readiness to read those minds, they stress the ease with which we do so.¹¹³

When we read about the mighty angel stepping out of heaven and roaring like a lion while thunders rumble and we hear that John is not

¹¹⁰ Auerbach, E. *Mimesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 549. 'We are convinced that the people whose story is told experience much more than [the author] can ever hope to tell.'

¹¹¹ Bal, M. *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004) 82.

¹¹² Bal, M. *Narratology* 115.

¹¹³ Jerome Bruner portrays the function of narrative through numerous literary references from Aristotle to Proust, which speak for the basic similarity of literature and science. Through the depiction of imagined worlds and their characters, similar to a scientific hypothesis, people read themselves into events, in order to make sense of the world. Bruner, J. *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003) 85–6.

supposed to write about what he has heard (10.4), we quickly arrive at a complex theoretical diagnosis: we conclude (though perhaps not consciously) that we have open access to the full picture because not even what John is denied to write is being kept from us. A more complex deduction by a more competent reader may actualize the connection between narrative control and rhetorical strategy:¹¹⁴ the story makes the reader want to imagine being let into secrets of great significance. In the latter case, there is a shift from the thought world of the protagonist to the activity of the constructing mind behind the text. Yet both layers are in interplay with the mind of the reader.

However fluent we may be at reading the minds of characters and in the process of attributing thoughts, beliefs, and desires to other people, this may lead to a misrepresentation.¹¹⁵ Thus, it is reasonable to resist the notion that we can readily figure out the thoughts of a person whose behaviour we are observing or that we can promptly disclose the nature of the constructing mind behind the production of an artefact.¹¹⁶ In the context of reading a literary text, including a biblical text, it is vital to take into account how the interplay of minds creates a virtual coming together which shapes the dynamic nature of the narrative and thus its meaning.¹¹⁷ By analysing the features that build our consciousness, we grasp the special interaction through which the mind constitutes and is constituted.¹¹⁸ I take this concept of virtuality from Wolfgang Iser,

¹¹⁴ This is also demonstrated in similar passages of unutterable utterances, such as 2Cor 12.4 and Mark 4.34. Ruiz, J.-P. "Hearing and Seeing but Not Saying: A Rhetoric of Authority in Revelation 10:4 and 2 Corinthians 12:4." D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 91–111.

¹¹⁵ Mind-reading is a type of imaginary transposition. Proctor, J. D. *Science, Religion, and the Human Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 239–52.

¹¹⁶ For measuring the relative success of mind-reading, the frames of reference differ very much from each other. For example, it may be a glaring failure in mind-reading to regard as tears of joy the tears of grief shed by the kings, merchants, sea captains, sailors and travellers at the destruction of Babylon (18.9–19). Zunshine, L. *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006) 13–6. From a cognitive point of view, an evident failure in mind-reading would be ignorance of the fact that water coursing down a face is usually indicative of current feelings. Zunshine, L. "Theory of Mind and Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness" 274.

¹¹⁷ Thompson, E. *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007) 221–42.

¹¹⁸ Meaning-making involves self-construction. Bruner, J. "Life as Narrative." *Social Research* 54 (1987) 11–32; Bruner, J. "The Narrative Construction of Reality" 1–21. Fur-

who points out that a reading of the text is not determined solely by its formal criteria of a text or entirely by the phenomenological process of reading, but by the interaction of both to create a virtual text.¹¹⁹ That is where we relate to its meaning.

1.3.3 *Shifts in Viewpoints*

As we narrow the scope of relevant renderings of the narrated world our cognitive adaptations enable us to contemplate a rich array of possibilities within that scope. What we are dealing with is an inborn tendency to organize information.¹²⁰ Our personal real-life frame takes part in the sorting out, and the context of the episode constrains our options even further. We might debate, for instance, on how to organize the information about John 'falling at his feet as though dead' in the opening scene 1:16. We could settle for an act of protection from danger, we could decide that it is unlikely that John would fall unconscious and uncontrolled, or we could begin to explore a range of spiritual and reverential actions with regard to beliefs and power. Any additional information, whether socio-historical, literary-historical or ideological-historical, that we bring to bear upon our reading of the passage, would alert us to new shades of the narrated happening. It is equally relevant to note, that the description of John 'falling at the feet' or 'bowing' may

thermore, it contains an element of co-construction, in which meaning is constructed in interaction in a specific context, like narrative discourse. In other words, an individual learns to interpret meanings and meaning-making in contexts in which meanings are created and transmitted. Minami, M. "Cultural Constructions of Meaning." C. Mandell and A. McCabe, eds. *The Problem of Meaning: Behavioral and Cognitive Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1997) 297; Ihanus, J. and L. Lipponen. "Jerome Bruner, Cultural Psychology and Narrative Thinking." *Psykologia* 32 (1997) 253–60.

¹¹⁹ Iser, W. *The Implied Reader* 42; Iser, W. *The Act of Reading* 20–1. See also Williams, J. *Theory and the Novel: Narrative Reflexivity in the British Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 73. David Herman addresses the basic concern about how readers use textual clues to build up representations of the virtual evoked by stories – the experience of being immersed in the storyworld created through narrative practices. Herman, D. "Narrative Ways of Worldmaking" 71–2.

¹²⁰ Jerome Bruner has presented a controversial but well documented proposal that human mind is equipped with two modes of cognitive processing, one paradigmatic, designed to develop propositions subject to empirical tests, the other narrative, designed to comprehend and develop stories. Drawing on psychology, linguistics and literary theory, Bruner weaves together interrelated themes, such as narrative thought, transactional theory, constructivism, education and literary criticism. Bruner, J. *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).

connect with something in the narratee's personal experience that induces him or her to give significantly more weight to one detail of the text at the expense of others. This means that you and I could justifiably arrive at differing readings of the narrated encounter of John in a rapture of the spirit on the isle of Patmos, within the setting of the Lord's Day in the first-century Roman Empire (1.9).¹²¹

In the angles of the narration,¹²² the narrative process unfolds a repetitive shift, which leads to an alternating experience of reading the text or hearing it performed: on the one hand, there is a shift between the documentary intensity and the immediacy of the performance, on the other hand, there are pauses of meaning-making disclosures. For example, the protagonist hears a loud commanding voice from behind (1.10,11; 4.1), and, turning, he sees a tranquil scene (1.12–16; 4.2–11). The two visionary scenes are followed by dialogical interaction. Such shifts create distance, yet they also hold up the rhythm in the reading, from re-kindling curiosity to satisfying it. We as narratees balance out our engagement with the characters – their visions and emotions – with the topical passages that present an assessment of them. Such halts treat the characters as constructs serving thematic and synthetic purposes.¹²³ This leads us to consider further issues on the dynamics of narrative of the Apocalypse. The narrative appears to combine, firstly, features triggering the integration of the narrated into the personal mental world of the reader, and, secondly, to insert explanatory sections complementing and commenting on the narration. These are the moments when interpretation enters the narration. Surprisingly, these alternating shifts do not stall the desire to press on with the narrative. As we are in a relationship with the Apocalypse as a literary artefact, we are driven by what we believe, what we value and desire with regard to it. Counting, simultaneously, on our real-life frames, our reading process accompanies the drive to see a change take place as we continue to

¹²¹ A description of 1.9 inevitably turns out as an interpretation reflecting the personal history, biases and desires of the reader. Fish, S. *Is there a Text in this Class?*; Fish, S. "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One." I. Konigsberg, ed. *American Criticism in the Poststructuralist Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981) 102–15.

¹²² For discussion on narratives dramatizing the medium, i.e. letters, transcribed oral narrations and editorial prefaces enframing them, see Duyhuizen, B. *Narratives of Transmission* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992) 225–6.

¹²³ Phelan, J. *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996) 40–2.

read, listen, and narrate/narrativize.

1.3.4 *Text and 'Site'*

Cognitively orientated narrative theorists identify narrative with the creation of a sense of subject position, where the event is made present in the mind of the narratee. Structural narratologists believe narrative should not only make present but also make intelligible what is in the text. Thus, for verifiable interpretations suggested by the text itself, they turn to a so-called objective analysis. This leads to de-emphasizing the subjective preferences, prejudgments and views of the analyst or reader,¹²⁴ and to a preoccupation with the text as separated from the mind both producing and consuming it.

Biblical narratological theorists, James Resseguie in particular, and also, possibly, David Barr, have commonly defined the narrative of the Apocalypse as a story about Jesus.¹²⁵ Although Barr refers to Thomas Leitch¹²⁶ and admits that story is not easily defined, he still maintains that the concept is obvious: content, form, structure, characterization, symbolism and setting all in accordance with the structuralistic narrative theories of the eighties.¹²⁷ However, in the Scholars of Biblical Literature Symposium volume Barr seems to have shifted his emphasis to picking up the narrative aspect of the Apocalypse as a literary product. The narratee shares an enactment, the imaginative experience of hearing the Apocalypse.¹²⁸ Barr continues: hearing John's Apocalypse

¹²⁴ Herman, L. and B. Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* 114.

¹²⁵ Resseguie, J. L. *Revelation Unsealed: A Narrative Critical Approach to John's Apocalypse*. Leiden: Brill, 1998; Barr, D. *Tales of the End*. Tonstad, S. K. *Saving God's Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation* (London: T & T Clark, 2006) argues that the cosmic conflict imagery is the primary and controlling element of the account.

¹²⁶ Leitch, T. *What Stories Are: Narrative Theory and Interpretation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986).

¹²⁷ Barr, D. *Tales of the End* 1–2.

¹²⁸ Barr, D. "Beyond Genre." D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse. Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 86. In this way, narrative can portray consciousness, particularly the consciousness of someone else. This raises the question of the relationship between narrative and lyrics or the profound mimetic moments we encounter in poetry. Narrative, lyrics, and poetry generate a sense of intense subjectivity. Hamburger, K. *The Logic of Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973) 83; Cohn, D. *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Bakhtin, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, transl. C. Emerson and M.

allows the narratee to gain a completely new perspective on the world it describes, even to the extent that the performance of the work reproduces its experience in the audience.¹²⁹

David Barr does not specify the role of the reader/audience bringing their real-life awareness into the experience. In cognitive narratology, the narrativity of the text is identified with perceptual factors, which define or determine human experience.¹³⁰ When the Apocalypse refers to the readers' real-life experience of deeds and emotions, like 'I know your deeds', 'I hate the Nicolaitans', 'I know your poverty', 'I know you live with Satan', 'I threaten you with my sword', 'I don't tolerate Jezebel', 'I know you are dead', 'have little strength and are lukewarm', 'I spat you out of my mouth', 'I counselled you to buy', 'I'll come and eat with you!' (2.2–3.20), the situatedness of the analyst or audience is regarded as an integral aspect of the reading experience. Unavoidably, the reading of the text and the distanced analytical reflections are affected by other narratives that precede the reading of real-life experience, which resonate in the form of interpretative habits. A reader constantly oscillates between text and 'site', the extra textual space and time of the reading, which distances him or her from the setting of the narrative itself.¹³¹

Literary-critical approaches of structuralist nature have been applied to the analysis of the Apocalypse, with Colin Hemer arguing for the referential function of its language, Schüssler Fiorenza for its poetic and evocative language in contrast to a language that defines meanings, Yarbrow Collins for its expressive language providing catharsis, and John Court for the creative literary art of historicizing myth and mythologizing history. Robert Scholes describes the structuralist narrative project as an attempt to uncover systems of signs and codes based on the differentiation between the manifest, or surface, level and two latent layers. The surface level is where the reader meets the characters and events; the latent layers are where the sequences of events can be constructed. Sequences are abstracted into concepts of themes, images,

Holquist, ed. M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 293; Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 83.

¹²⁹ Barr, D. "Beyond Genre" 89.

¹³⁰ Herman, D. *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 143–53.

¹³¹ Pundry, D. *Narrative after Deconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) 33.

and the structure of the plot.¹³² Structuralist theories provide tools for investigating the tectonics of the narrative in relation to semantic clusters, as well as for exploring specific meanings produced by correlating features of textuality and formal structure.

Thus, the structuralistic narratological position has regarded stories as 'sequences of events', but this characterization ignores the fact that events are not in themselves stories but rather the raw material out of which the experience of the narrated story emerges.¹³³ Therefore, a narrated story is a representation,¹³⁴ but unlike discourse, it is not a representation encoded in material signs. The story, as we hear it, is a mental image, a cognitive construct that concerns certain types of entities and relations between these entities. Narrative may be, on the one hand, a combination of what traditionally is understood to be a story, and, on the other hand, its discourse.¹³⁵ But it is the ability of a narrative to evoke stories in the mind that distinguishes narrative discourse from other text types.¹³⁶

Ricoeur supports an understanding of narrative along these premises when he sides with the Augustinian mode of the narrative, balancing out the Aristotelian involvement with plot. The complexity involved in viewing a textual artefact is what Ricoeur feels to be the interior of narrative: the human mind confronting what he calls the *apriori*.¹³⁷ Ricoeur

¹³² Hemer, C. J. *The Letters to the Seven Churches* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986) 16–20; Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *The Book of Revelation* 186; Yarbrow Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 153; Court, J. M. *Myth and History in the Book of Revelation* (London: SPCK, 1979) 165; Scholes, R. *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 10.

¹³³ Narrative is defined as combination of story and discourse, of which story is an event or sequence of events (the action) and narrative discourse those events as represented. Abbott, H. P. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* 16.

¹³⁴ Sturges, P. J. M. *Narrativity: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 56.

¹³⁵ In most narrative models, the story-discourse distinction is interplay of dynamic tension. Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 333–41.

¹³⁶ According to Vincent Descombes, there are ample reasons for caution about cognitivism and what appears to be its chronic fear of ambiguity. Descombes, V. *The Mind's Provisions. A Critique of Cognitivism*, transl. S. A. Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). However, I side with Meir Sternberg who maintains that, in principle, those aspects do not attach to the mind's workings on text, least of all narrative. Sternberg, M. "Universals of Narrative and Their Cognitivist Fortunes (I)." *Poetics Today* 24 (2003) 297–395.

¹³⁷ Paul Ricoeur remarks that texts are not configurations 'out there' but, rather, in

appropriates from Jürgen Habermas the necessity of unconstrained interaction, which can occur through multiple forms of discourse. These do not include only the discourse of rational argumentation, but also that of viewing, which creates impressions.¹³⁸

Inherent to the experiencing of the Apocalypse is a strong analogy with arts; the reader/narratee crosses a border into another reality. To place oneself as a narratee includes the potential of transformation by the alterity encountered in art: the otherness that appeals as part of one's self. Similarly, the interest of the narratee who reads, hears and views the apocalyptic images originates in the undiscovered otherness of the Apocalypse. Admittedly, the experience of another world is possible because, to the extent that the artefact as such is perennially incomprehensible, the otherness is recognized as a comprehensible accessible reality of experience.¹³⁹ Such an encounter does not merely communicate information, though the impressiveness is built into a storyline of events; rather it emphasizes the dynamics of the imaginative. Thus, the narrative design may not primarily hint at information about the future, but rather offers insight on what present reality consists of.¹⁴⁰ Hence, most of the narrated action of the Apocalypse takes place in the past or present tense. Analogous to a Greek play, the Apocalypse presents a simultaneous insight of time in which the character sees not only the past and future, but also the present action, which is revealed as if by a messenger. The past, present and future are compressed so closely together that the recipient sees all as part of one picture, and the present becomes one phase of a cycle.

reading, become completed compositions. The narrative experience is anchored in the imaginative world of the narratee. Ricoeur, P. "Life in Quest of Narrative." D. Wood, ed. *On Paul Ricoeur* (London: Routledge, 1991) 21–9; Ricoeur, P. "Myth as the Bearer of Possible Worlds." M. J. Valdés, ed. *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflections and Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 490.

¹³⁸ Habermas, J. "Modernity versus Postmodernity." *New German Critique* 22 (1981) 10–1.

¹³⁹ Pippin favours readings that show the impossibility of reconciling the whole of the narrative. Pippin, T. *Death and Desire. The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992) 23, 25.

¹⁴⁰ Cook, S. L. "Mythological Discourse in Ezekiel and Daniel and the Rise of Apocalypticism in Israel." L. Grabbe and R D. Haak, eds. *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic and Their Relationships* (London: T & T Clark, 2003) 85–106.

CHAPTER TWO

READING THE FORM OF THE APOCALYPSE

We dance around in a ring and suppose,
but the Secret sits in the middle and knows.¹

In this chapter, I deal with the relationship between the formal features of the Apocalypse and the reading experience. In dealing with the determining factors of literariness in the Apocalypse, this chapter looks into the exegetical conventions around the notion of apocalyptic. This includes the degree of the relationship between the apocalypses in general, as well as genre descriptions that tend to be tailored to fit the New Testament Apocalypse.²

We all agree as to what is a Greek comedy or tragedy. We know they are plays that were performed, although we may read them as written texts. Nevertheless, in reading the Apocalypse, we are still debating about the nature of the text. Readers repeatedly arrive at conclusions that are in tension with each other. The narrative elements of the work are one factor contributing to a tantalizingly fuzzy notion of how to read the Apocalypse. However, apocalyptic and apocalypticism are terms that have relevance in several cultural and religious discourses, no matter how slippery the concept are.³

Many of the general mental images whose origin we assume to be in the Apocalypse are, more accurately speaking, located in the frames governing its reading.⁴ Those involving themselves in reading the Apocalypse make different selections with regard to the elements that stem from form, content and function that contribute to the book's interpre-

¹ Robert Frost as quoted in Rodden, J. and M. Dickstein, eds. *Lionel Trilling and the Critics: Opposing Selves* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) xv.

² This paradigm is commonly noted as fitting the definition to an ideologically oriented understanding of the last book of the New Testament. Bailey, J. L. and L. D. Vander Broek. *Literary Forms in the New Testament. A Handbook* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992) 202.

³ Webb, R. L. "Apocalyptic: Observations on a Slippery Term." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 49 (1990) 115–26.

⁴ Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 213.

tative frames when reading the Apocalypse. This results in a variety of interpretative experiences of the artefact.⁵ A frame, according to Manfred Jahn, refers to the cognitive model that a reader selects and uses in the process of reading.⁶ An example of such a mental frame is found in what Paul Hanson identifies as ideology affecting a social movement.⁷ For Hanson, this reading frame for the artefact bespeaks of a socially deprived and possibly a religious fringe group, and he maintains that it is a controlling scheme for the reading experience. However, as will be shown below, this frame may confuse the distinction between the formation of an ideology and the social realities of the movement.

Most descriptions of the traits of the Apocalypse, such as literary functions, eschatological motifs and psychological characteristics, neglect other ideas and motifs prominent in the literary production of apocalypses. Michael Stone observes that certain Jewish apocalypses provide lists of revealed things: astronomy, meteorology and cosmology, the secrets of nature and wisdom. Other recurrent motifs include mysticism, existential anthropology and historiography.⁸ The notion of apocalyptic aids the reader by means of its own history of development, which essentially has taken place apart from the artefact of the Apocalypse. As Barry Matlock observes, there is an inherent circular reasoning in fitting the Apocalypse to an ideological reading.⁹ Right from the start, a seemingly historical ideology, labelled apocalyptic, was contrived and has been used as a supposed aid to the understanding of the New Testament and thus also to perceiving the Apocalypse. The result is a self-fulfilling project.¹⁰

⁵ Yolanda Majors, in a concrete way, deals with the issue that readers conceive a phenomenon based on their expectations. Consequently, concerning an assumed phenomenon and grounded in form, content and function, expectations are created, which serve to reconstruct the text in question. Majors, Y. J. "Narrations of Cross-cultural Encounters as Interpretative Frames for Reading Word and World." *Discourse & Society* 7 (2007) 480.

⁶ Jahn, M. "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Towards a Cognitive Narratology." *Poetics Today* 18 (1997) 441–68.

⁷ Hanson, P. D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979) 432–4.

⁸ Stone, M. E. *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha with Special Reference to Armenian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) 379–417; Stone, M. E. "A Reconsideration of Apocalyptic Visions." *Harvard Theological Review* 96 (2003) 167–80.

⁹ Matlock, R. B. *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul. Paul's Interpreters and the Rhetoric of Criticism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 279–98.

¹⁰ Matlock labels this activity a vicious circle – a sort of irrational scripture-inter-

The construction of a genre definition for apocalyptic, according to which readers proceed from a general understanding to a particular text, is, inevitably, a deductive process.¹¹ A great deal of the discussion about apocalyptic and apocalypses is carried out, as Stone puts it, in the midst of semantic confusion.¹² The term 'apocalyptic' is used broadly to define a religious ideology, a social construct, a genre represented by a body of writings, and a particular way of viewing life, while the Apocalypse is assumed to be a product of all of these – an apocalyptic text. In short, apocalyptic has become a definition of a concept it has also been applied to the life of the various presumed producers and consumers of the apocalypses.¹³

2.1 DEFINING THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE ARTEFACT

In defining the Apocalypse, attempts are made at two levels: concern with specifying its characteristics and a desire to pin down how they correspond at large to narratives labelled apocalypses.¹⁴ 'Apocalypse' as a genre, 'apocalypticism' as an ideology and 'apocalyptic' eschatology as a movement have intrinsic heuristic values, as Lorenzo DiTommaso summarizes in a critical evaluation.¹⁵ The varying perceptions of the artefact and the assumptions about its nature are factors that determine its reading strategy.¹⁶ John Collins, commissioned by the Society of Biblical Literature in the 1970s to analyse apocalyptic literature of

prets-scripture scheme. Matlock, R. B. *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul* 281–2.

¹¹ Rosmarin, A. *The Power of Genre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985) 22–50.

¹² Stone, M. E. "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature." F. M. Cross, W. E. Lemke, and P. D. Miller, eds. *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God. Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (New York: Doubleday, 1976) 439.

¹³ For the difficulties in defining the genre of the Apocalypse, see Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic* 39–65.

¹⁴ For challenges confronted in recent research on apocalypses and apocalypticism, see DiTommaso, L. "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity." *Currents in Biblical Research* 5, no. 2 (2007), 235–86; DiTommaso, L. "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity." *Currents in Biblical Research* 5, no. 3 (2007), 367–432.

¹⁵ DiTommaso, L. "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism in Antiquity" 239.

¹⁶ Linton, G. "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse: The Limits of Genre." D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse. Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 12.

both Jewish and Christian origins, has this well-known description:

Apocalypse is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.¹⁷

This description of the artefact addresses the aspects of form, content and function.¹⁸ The definition does not stress visualization. Since the nature of visualizations varies within the alleged apocalypses, these writings, though they appear to be similar in form, may in their visualized content have only a few general traits in common.

The particular make-up of the artefact is emphasized in its labelling. This results in names like *The Book of Revelation*, *John's Revelation*, *The Revelation to John*, *Revelation*, *The Apocalypse of John*, *The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* and *The Apocalypse*. Throughout this study, I have chosen to refer to the artefact as the *Apocalypse*. My choice of the designation is in line with the imagistic narrative composition. Moreover, ancient writings were better known by their opening words. The first word of the artefact, 'apocalypse', emphasises 'manifestation' and 'appearing' rather than argumentation and rationalization. Paul uses the same expression to convey a similar juxtaposition between an epistemology through human reasoning and interchange and a way of knowing through appearance, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου παρέλαβον αὐτό οὔτε ἐδιδάχθην ἀλλὰ δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal.1.12).

2.1.1 *The Notion of a Setting*

Though commonly accepted, it may be inaccurate to assume that the social function or setting of apocalypses is integrally related to sectarian, fringe or deprived movements, as Hanson claims. Crisis situations have long been considered grounds for apocalyptic writings, and na-

¹⁷ Collins, J. J. "Apocalyptic Literature." C. Evans and S. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Backgrounds* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 41.

¹⁸ Hellholm, D. "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John." *Semeia* 36 (1986) 13–64. David Aune points out that the notion of apocalyptic genre has mostly been based on phenomenological judgements. However, factors like audience expectations, structure, use of sources and rhetorical patterns for a construction of the concept of apocalyptic genre, have the potential of being more appropriate elements. Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic* 39.

tional crises affect all classes of society. Stephen Cook argues that millennial movements can arise from any social group, not from marginal groups alone. He outlines the role of apocalyptic in the development of mythology as part of the Second Temple religious thought.¹⁹ Cook, however, is concerned about the myriad ways in which readers, in an attempt to crack it like a secret code, domesticate the apocalyptic literature. He maintains that apocalyptic, contrary to the generally assumed conception, is less about the future than about the past and present.²⁰ Robert Webb likewise points out that Hanson's schema blurs distinctions between ideology and social movement.²¹

Research on the creation of apocalypses recognizes diverse reasons for their production, including refinement of epistemological issues, redrawing eschatological timelines, and resolution of group-internal conflicts through exhortation and/or consolation. Certainly, drawing attention to the immediacy of eschatological expectations so as to compel a desired ethical conduct, even endurance in the face of persecution, is one of the foremost reasons for the production of such writings.²² Christopher Rowland and John Barton agree that the eschatological outlook in the apocalypses includes also personal eschatology making, as the substance of the Apocalypse, any system of beliefs concerning the last or final matters such as death, the judgment and the future state of existence elusive. Moreover, Barton questions the view affirmed by Hanson that the development and use of an apocalyptic genre can be outlined in neat categories.²³ Hanson's claim of a connection between a distinctive literary type, an ideology and a social group is complex and difficult to apply to the form and function of a given narrative.²⁴ Han-

¹⁹ Cook, S. L. *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) 85–121.

²⁰ Cook, S. L. *The Apocalyptic Literature. Interpreting Biblical Texts* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003) 140; Cook, S. L. "Mythological Discourse" 85–106.

²¹ Webb, R. L. "Apocalyptic: Observations on a Slippery Term" 115–26.

²² Christopher Rowland asserts that eschatological orientation is not necessarily an essential element of apocalypticism. Rowland, C. C. *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982) 14. See also Kreitzer, L. "Apocalyptic, Apocalypticism." R. Martin and P. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997) 58.

²³ Hanson, P. D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* 12–6.

²⁴ Collins, J. J. "Temporality and Politics in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature." C. C. Rowland and J. Barton, eds. *Apocalyptic in History and Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield

son acknowledges that defining the content of the apocalyptic genre by means of a list of eschatological traits is oversimplifying and misleading.²⁵ While he keeps to the view that eschatology may contribute important motifs to the apocalyptic genre, he states that eschatology alone is inadequate for defining the artefact as such.

It is worth observing that in Palestine from the second century BCE through the first century CE there were two well-known movements usually characterized as apocalyptic: Qumran and Christianity. However, neither of them was a major producer of apocalypses. Qumran produced none,²⁶ and out of the movement of Christianity only one was included in the canon. A large bulk of documents labelled apocalypses according to the standard definition belongs to Jewish Merkabah mysticism and the related Heikhalot texts in rabbinic literature,²⁷ including Gnostic texts, which do not seem to emerge from the typical social and ideological contexts attributed to apocalyptic. The relationship between a literary genre and social phenomena as a sole indicator for the characterization of the Apocalypse is thus debatable.

For Collins, a genre is not constituted by one or more specific themes, but by a distinctive combination of elements, all of which may also be found elsewhere.²⁸ According to Collins, this may be an adequate way to explain the relationship between form and content. However, the connection between form and content is surprisingly complex. The Sibylline Oracles, for example, are poetic in form, yet many would include them in the genre of apocalypse. Steven Friesen observes that we seem to know the content and perspective of the Apocalypse, even though very few features of the apocalyptic pattern appear in the text.²⁹ As with all cultural studies, the literary criticism of a text such as the Apocalypse overlaps with social-scientific criticism. By considering

Academic Press, 2003) 26–43.

²⁵ Hanson, P. D. "Apocalypse, Genre, and Apocalypticism." *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976) 27–34.

²⁶ García Martínez, F. "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 78 (2002) 536–49; García Martínez, F. "The End of the World or the Transformation of History? Intertestamental Apocalyptic." E. J. C. Tigchelaar, ed. *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 169–93.

²⁷ See discussion in chapter 3.

²⁸ Collins, J. J. "Sibylline Oracles." C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 1107.

²⁹ Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John* 213.

the manner in which something is said in the Apocalypse, the literary critic gains information that in turn has a social dimension. By investigating the social location of the author and the readers, the social historian can also shed light on the style and form of the Apocalypse. If we persist in restricting the reading experience of the Apocalypse to its thematic content, we may miss other insights that could be gained by considering its form and the dynamics of formal elements as a reading experience.

Writers draw upon their literary competence when they write, and the genre functions as a contract presented to the reader, a pledge to which the conventions of the product adhere.³⁰ Gregory Linton invites attention to Ricoeur's proposition that the function of establishing a genre description is to define a common dynamic between the production of a literary work and the way it is experienced.³¹ Thus, the rules of reading are provided by the genre description. However, the Apocalypse bears resemblance to a broad array of compositional categories, but does not adhere to any single one alone. Readers, in turn, in order to comprehend what they are dealing with, react according to the well-established principle that people relate their encounter with an artefact to some familiar type of expression.³² Given the varieties of expression in the Apocalypse, readers face, beyond the predominant tag of the apocalyptic genre attributable to the document's prophetic end-of-the-world values, an assortment of comprehension adjustments.

2.2 FRAMING A HYBRID TEXT

Placing the Apocalypse within a clear textual category has turned out to be less than conclusive. Linton³³ draws attention to Ramsey Michaels'

³⁰ Linton, G. "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse" 15.

³¹ Linton, G. "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse" 13–4.

³² A reading strategy adhering to literary competence suggests that, in reading literature, there is a very powerful convention, the assumption that a text contains material of collective significance about the human condition in general, rather than about the person's life in particular. Culler, J. *Structuralist Poetics* 114.

³³ John J. Collins' genre-analysis notwithstanding, Gregory L. Linton points out that the Apocalypse overruns its generic boundaries and is similar to prophecy, apocalypse, letter, drama, liturgy, and myth, or their various combinations but not identical with any of them. This challenges the construction of an apocalyptic genre and underlines the circular and deductive processes behind the genre definition. Linton, G. "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse" 10, 16–20.

description of the Apocalypse as being of mixed genre: if a letter, it is like no other early Christian letter we possess; if an apocalypse, it is like no other apocalypse; if prophecy, it is unique among prophecies.³⁴ This is in tune with the scholarly consensus on the composition of the Apocalypse as a hybrid genre containing a combination of literary techniques.³⁵ Locating the Apocalypse within a single genre description, in turn, restricts the text within that particular boundary setting and influences the reading experience.³⁶ In fact, the pursuit for a specific genre underscores the desire to precondition 'the what', the nature and function of the text.

The Apocalypse appears to make use of diverse social systems (reconcilable through structuration) that are rather unfamiliar to the modern reader. Consequently, attempts to get a grasp of the Apocalypse have been predominantly a question of defining its genre, as noted above. Discussing genre definition for the Apocalypse in particular includes looking into how the collective term, apocalyptic, has come into use side by side with the generic attributes of the Apocalypse as narrative. Friesen identifies broadly a distinctive style of narrating in the Apocalypse, which he recognizes as common among Mediterranean cultures in the Greco-Roman world.³⁷ However, as this study puts forward, narrating within a frame of mythic patterns³⁸, as they emerge

³⁴ Michaels, J. R. *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992) 30–2.

³⁵ Barr, D. ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse. Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 2. See also overview of the genre discussion in Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 37–43. Generic features have been brought forward in order to define or detect genres: size, metre, subject, external structure, occasion, characters and style. However, there are several related but distinct dimensions of genre, like the generic matrix, intrinsic genre and analytical genre. Not only does this summon us to thoughtfully consider a broader range of generic features in our deliberations for classifying texts, but it also invites us to consider several different genres with respect to a single text. Sparks, K. L. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible. A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006) 7. This is exemplified by the fact that narrative techniques and devices are not genre-bound: they are taken over and adapted freely from texts belonging to one genre by authors working in another genre. de Jong, I., R. Nünlist, and A. Bowie, eds. *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 545–6.

³⁶ Linton, G. "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse" 16.

³⁷ Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John* 171.

³⁸ For discussion on the frame of mythic patterns, see Yarbrow Collins, A. *The Com-*

in the Apocalypse, bridges over time and cultural gaps. Consequently, the narrative is located outside human conduct, and the narratee must work out what is going on, regardless of historical time and place. It would thus seem that a possibly fluid subject matter plays a key role in the choice of the narrative form as a mode of expression. That is to say, the sole purpose of the Apocalypse may not be to inform the narratee about, for example, the future, which is often considered to be its narrative concern. Suffice it to say that the recurring disagreements over the Apocalypse's generic identity also cast doubt over its generally perceived intent and narrative form.

2.2.1 *The Role of a Frame*

To put together a genre description is a deductive process, which through its intentionality functions like a frame that is part of a picture. Defining the frame proceeds from establishing an intention, to perceiving an idea. Analysing the pursuit of genre defining, Adene Rosmarin characterizes the results as pragmatic rather than natural, defined rather than found, used rather than described.³⁹ The exploration within a dialectics between the artefact and a possible context is part of the process that creates a frame to accompany the artefact. In the case of the Apocalypse, the frame functions to partly constitute a model of first century Mediterranean society, the milieu of early Christianity. As part of the framing, any shift in awareness concerning the assumed setting reflects on a given definition of a genre. This has a definite impact on the reading experience. For example, the concept of the Late-Antique society being divided, in the Boussetian manner, into strictly defined religious groups guided the reading, until the dualistic social paradigm was subjected to critical enquiry.⁴⁰ The common per-

bat Myth in the Book of Revelation (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976) 207–11.

³⁹ Linton, G. "Reading the Apocalypse as Apocalypse" 17–8; Rosmarin, A. *The Power of Genre* 23–50.

⁴⁰ For Bousset's assumption of an era of purity in Judaism, see his classic expression concerning the origins of early cultic worship of Christ in Bousset, W. *Kyrios Christos, Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), and Bousset, W. *Jesus der Herr. Nachträge und Auseinandersetzungen zu Kyrios Christos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1916). In several recent studies, unqualified equation of Palestinian Judaism with unhellenized religiosity has been criticised. Hengel, M. *The Hellenization of Judea in the First Century after Christ* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003); Hurtado, L. W. *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (London: T & T Clark,

ception, which has been challenged, is that the rabbis and the apostles largely based their worldview on a we/they dichotomy:⁴¹ ‘We’ were presumed to be normative leaders fighting against infringement in order to preserve the faith. ‘They’ were seen as the trespassers, whose identity could vary from Jews to Christians to Gnostics to Dead Sea sectarians to followers of some form of Paganism. In other words, the Apocalypse would shun any interchange between religious traditions and secular-sacred domains. Dale Martin voices the commonplace conclusion in recent biblical studies: the Hellenism/Judaism dichotomy is dispensable.⁴² If this is the case, the frame would look different and, through this change, the reading experience of the Apocalypse would be subject to revision.

Philip Alexander likewise points out that, from the earliest antiquity, all the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East were in constant contact and interchange at the material as well as intellectual level. Therefore, instead of a picture of two essentially autonomous cultures, destined to collide, he offers a fluid interactive picture, where broadly uniform cultural patterns and structures provide the mental landscape for a set of cultures whose boundaries were always permeable.⁴³ A model of shared origins or cultural frameworks for religions

2003) 23–34; Stuckenbruck, L. *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995) 6; Gieschen, C. A. *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 9; Casey, M. “Lord Jesus Christ: A Response to Professor Hurtado.” *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 27 (2004) 83–96.

⁴¹ Hurtado accepts the post-Boussetian view that no simple evolution from Jewish to Hellenistic culture took place. Hurtado, L. W. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?: Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) 16–8. See also Horbury, W. *Herodian Judaism and New Testament Study* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 93–6; Yarbro Collins, A. “How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? A Reply.” D. B. Capes et al., eds. *Israel’s God and Rebecca’s Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008) 55–66.

⁴² Martin, D. “Paul and the Judaism/Hellenism Dichotomy: Toward a Social History of the Question.” T. Engberg-Pedersen, ed. *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 5–6, 29–62. See also Gerdmar, A. *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy: A Historiographical Study of Second Peter and Jude* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001) 341.

⁴³ Alexander, P. S. “Hellenism and Hellenization as Problematic Historiographical Categories.” T. Engberg-Pedersen, ed. *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 63–80.

and their religious texts would thus rebuild the make-up of the first century Mediterranean society.⁴⁴

So, in view of this plurality, what is the role of the reader? Herman suggests that we would do well to study the patterned, nonrandom ways in which readers and listeners tend to impute structure to certain strings of events presented in a discourse.⁴⁵ Manfred Jahn refers, as I hinted at in the Introduction, to frames as scripts or preference rules that clarify structural, lexical, referential and illocutionary ('performative' and 'constative utterances') ambiguities. Thus, frames supply the defaults to fill gaps in the discourse and provide, without explicit terms, the presuppositions for a narratee experience.⁴⁶ Framing is very similar to filling the gaps in the narrative, to which Iser and others have drawn attention. This process can be very extensive in the case of sparsely sketched characters, where the reading practice is very creative in constructing coherent and continuous narrative consciousnesses from a minimum of information. As Robert Alter points out, it is characteristic of biblical narratives to be silent where later modes of literature choose to be loquacious.⁴⁷

Because the Apocalypse invites the reader/narratee to draw on a selection of literary conventions the form does not clearly delineate the reading. Readers, however, are free to make decisions and thus to take part in the production of its meaning. The Apocalypse can be compared to a kaleidoscope: a different perspective is obtained every time one looks into the shuffled pieces, every time one moves the same pieces within the same tube they are mirrored at a different angle. Much of this phenomenon, as well as the result it leads to lies in the deliberate ambiguity of the Apocalypse, which, in turn, raises awareness about its experiential aspect. Consequently, the need for a genre discussion aiming at pinning down authorial intention such as ideology, ethics and message shifts towards the reading experience. In other words, the

⁴⁴ Robbins, V. "Social-Scientific Criticism and Literary Studies." P. F. Esler, ed. *Modelling Early Christianity. Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (London: Routledge, 1995) 274–89.

⁴⁵ Herman, D. "Introduction: Narratologies." D. Herman, ed. *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999) 8.

⁴⁶ Jahn, M. "'Speak, Friend, and Enter': Garden Paths, Artificial Intelligence, and Cognitive Narratology." D. Herman, ed. *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999) 176.

⁴⁷ Alter, R. *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) 114–5.

discussion on the genre of the Apocalypse deals with implementing clues while reading. Since readers construct genres as frames to guide their experience, the discussion on genre calls for an analysis of the experientiality of reading. Incidentally, this means putting the discussion on genre aside, in order to focus on reading the narrative while constructing a form of consciousness.

In the analysis in Part Two, I intend to take into consideration the effect of the juxtaposition of historical and narrative elements. Thus, I place the question of genre not only within the context of a particular ideology with millenarian religious overtones,⁴⁸ but I also direct it to the issue of form with the intention of revising the perception of the artefact and, consequently, the experiencing of the Apocalypse. In a similar manner, the Apocalypse appears to make use of a technique that requires readers to fill in different aspects of thought, feeling or behaviour. When reader/narratees are invited to construct their own guidelines for organizing their expectations of the text, Monika Fludernik calls the reading process a naturalization of the text.⁴⁹ This happens by identifying similarities in the narrated world to the contemporary real-life usage of possible patterns of expression and narration found in the text. These need a naturalization process, to which the reader/narratee is drawn and through which various avenues for the experience of the Apocalypse are attainable. The result amounts to a reader participation generating imaginative, individual possibilities.

2.3 THE SCRIPTURE PROFILE OF THE APOCALYPSE

Even though no other New Testament book appears to be as saturated with the Hebrew Scriptures as the Apocalypse, it seems to resist efforts to clarify that relationship.⁵⁰ Rather than quoting the sources, the

⁴⁸ For discussion on religious expectations for a glorious transformed existence on earth, as posited by millenarian ideology, see Räisänen, H. "Last Things First." T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele, eds. *Moving beyond New Testament Theology? Essays in Conversation with Heikki Räisänen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 464–69.

⁴⁹ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 330.

⁵⁰ Moyise, S. "The Language of the Old Testament in the Apocalypse." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 76 (1999) 97–113; Tabachovitz, D. *Die Septuaginta und das Neue Testament* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1956) 125–6; Brown, R. E. *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Doubleday, 1981) 1: cxxix; Fitzmyer, J. A. *Wandering Aramean:*

Apocalypse interacts with them in an alluding manner.⁵¹ A word here and a phrase there, an echo yet in another place, with no seeming regard for the original context of the potential source – this is one way of describing how the allusions of the Apocalypse evoke the Hebrew Scriptures.⁵² Collins holds that the sources⁵³ from which ideas are developed⁵⁴ in the Apocalypse do not, inherently, determine their value. An important factor is the way they are combined.⁵⁵ Within Collins' frame of reasoning, a variety of seed ideas rapidly grew out of a historical condition and produced the colourful and diverse literature of Jewish apocalypticism⁵⁶ and the biblical Apocalypse, which has a strong affinity with that tradition.

While there is a consensus that the Apocalypse was originally writ-

Collected Aramaic Essays (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) 6–8, 38–43.

⁵¹ Paulien, J. "Dreading The Whirlwind: Intertextuality and The Use of The Old Testament in Revelation." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 39 (2001) 5–22.

⁵² Jauhainen, M. *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 18–36.

⁵³ Richard Bauckham upholds the canonical context as the primary source for understanding the form and origins of the Apocalypse. Bauckham, R. *The Climax of Prophecy* x–xi. With regard to non-canonical allusions, the opposite view is presented by Leonard Thompson, 'one eye must be on the large circle of revelatory texts, the other on the specific language and themes of John's book.' Thompson, L. L. *Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998) 35.

⁵⁴ The canonical approach supposes that the text can be read within 'the Bible's own inner world.' Cook, S. L. "Mythological Discourse" 64–70; Osborne, G. R. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006) 285. Then again, Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, after having been introduced to the non-canonical texts of 4Ezra, the Sibyllin Oracles and 1Enoch, came to believe that, in Palestine, between 150 BC and 150 CE, there existed a distinct literary tendency, which he labelled, along with Hilgenfeld and Reuss, 'apocalyptic.' Schmidt, J. M. *Die Jüdische Apokalyptik. Die Geschichte ihrer Erforschung von den Anfängen bis den Textfunden von Qumran*, 2nd. edition (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976) 98 n. 3; Koch, K. "Einleitung." K. Koch and J. M. Schmidt, eds. *Apokalyptik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982) 3.

⁵⁵ Collins, J. J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1984) 16–7.

⁵⁶ Collins, J. J. *Apocalypse: The Morphology Of A Genre* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 9; Collins, J. J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Russell prefers to speak of the apocalyptic as a religious mood built up in a natural way by combining these formal characteristics. Russell, D. S. *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic: 200 B.C.–A.D. 100* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964) 91, 104.

ten in Greek,⁵⁷ the language and text tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures the Apocalypse possibly utilized are disputed.⁵⁸ Therefore, although it may be granted that the Hebrew Scriptures hold a strategic place in the Apocalypse, it appears difficult to determine the role of the veritable mosaic of words, themes and passages originating in the Hebrew Scriptures. The result is something novel.⁵⁹ Stephen Moyise argues that the Apocalypse offers new meanings to old texts, whereas Gregory Beale claims that it simply gives old texts new relevance.⁶⁰ Robert Royalty sees the way the Apocalypse reads from the Hebrew Scriptures and attempts to control its audience as a function of a polemic against other Christian and Jewish leaders. In other words, the Apocalypse is not just reinterpreting the Hebrew Scriptures; it is subversively rewriting⁶¹ them into a revelatory vision in order to exercise control over the original source. Constructed into the form of an apocalyptic-prophetic script, the Apocalypse, for the purpose of ideological conviction, reinscribes the Hebrew Scriptures and circumscribes its audience.⁶²

⁵⁷ Charles, R. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920) 1:lxvi; Mussies, G. *The Morphology of Koine Greek as Used in the Apocalypse of St. John: A Study in Bilingualism* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 10–1; Yarbro Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 47–9.

⁵⁸ Mussies, G. “The Greek of the Book of Revelation.” J. Lambrecht, ed. *L’Apocalypse Johannique et l’Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1980) 167–70; Thompson, S. *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁵⁹ Fitzmyer, J. A. *The Semitic Background of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Stuckenbruck, L. T. “An Approach to the New Testament through Aramaic Sources: The Recent Methodological Debate.” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 8 (1991) 3–29.

⁶⁰ Moyise, S. “Authorial Intention and the Book of Revelation.” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 39 (2001) 35–40. See also Paul, I. “Ebbing and Flowing: Scholarly Developments in Study of the Book of Revelation.” *The Expository Times* 119 (2008) 523–31.

⁶¹ Many of the Jewish apocalypses are usually classified as belonging to the genre of the ‘rewritten Bible.’ Nickelsburg, G. W. E. “The Bible Rewritten and Explained.” Stone, M. E., ed. *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 89.

⁶² Royalty, R. M. “Don’t Touch This Book! Rev 22:18–19 and the Rhetoric of Reading (in) the Apocalypse of John.” *Biblical Interpretation* 12 (2004) 282–99.

2.3.1 *Literary Freedom*

In their involvement with the Hebrew Scriptures, early Christian writers appear to have made use of a number of methods, for which we have evidence also outside the New Testament. The exegetical method most obviously used by both New Testament writers and their Jewish contemporaries is perhaps Midrash.⁶³ Midrash is an example of the usage of Scripture for purposes of composition and delivery of religious discourse exploring specific texts.⁶⁴ Another, liturgical method of exegesis that may have particular relevance for the liturgical passages of the Apocalypse was utilized in the Aramaic Targums,⁶⁵ represented in the creation of hymns out of existing texts. There is also evidence of a reading strategy we could call typological, which invites narratees to see analogies between Israel's past and the present situation. In a typological reading, persons, institutions and/or events described in an earlier text can be regarded as models or prefigurations of later persons, institutions or events,⁶⁶ a hermeneutical principle endorsed later by Augustine.⁶⁷

⁶³ In midrashic exegesis, the Hebrew Scripture was used not so much to bolster the authority of the exegete as to update a religious understanding. Beale, G. K. *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984); Miller, M. "Targum, Midrash and the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 2 (1971) 29–82; Neusner, J. *Midrash in Context. Exegesis in Formative Judaism* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1988); Boyarin, D. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 1–21. However, David Lincicum draws attention to Francis Watson's observation that there is a striking discrepancy between a paraenetic use of the Hebrew Scriptures and their reconstruction by Paul. Watson, F. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 425; Lincicum, D. "Paul's Engagement with Deuteronomy: Snapshots and Signposts." *Currents in Biblical Research* 7 (2008) 37–67.

⁶⁴ For discussion on targumic exegesis, see Le Déaut, R. "Targumic Literature and New Testament Interpretation." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 4 (1974) 243–89; McNamara, M. *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978); Patte, D. *Early Jewish Hermeneutic in Palestine* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975) 65–81.

⁶⁵ Weir, J. "Analogous Fulfillment." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 9 (1982) 65–76; Goppelt, L. *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, transl. D. Madvig (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002).

⁶⁶ Beale, G. K. *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 13–59.

⁶⁷ Carol Harrison makes an ample analysis of how the former Imperial Rhetor adapted the current literary climate to a Christian context. Especially this can be seen

A number of specialized works have addressed the use of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Apocalypse. In spite of the inconclusive evidence regarding the particular source and text-type used by the author, the overwhelming impact of these scriptural allusions has been repeatedly acknowledged.⁶⁸ Accordingly, the Apocalypse represents a highly constructed sample of literary creativity, characterized by complex intertextuality and ideological agendas, quite contrary to an unstructured development of the text with no consideration for the immediate reader experience.

Nevertheless, it was common for Jewish writers to utilize the Hebrew Scriptures in two distinct ways: the compositional and the expository.⁶⁹ Compositional use occurs when the biblical elements are interwoven into the work without external formal markers and are made subservient to the independent aim and structure of their new context.⁷⁰ Deborah Dimant defines expository use as a literary strategy in which the Hebrew Scriptures are presented explicitly, with

in the way Augustine interprets the events and characters of the Hebrew Scripture as an enacted anticipation of the new. The Augustinian typological hermeneutics focuses on the metaphor, whereas the Hebrew Midrash conceives the religious phenomenon rather constructed as a metonym. Harrison, C. *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 46–78.

⁶⁸ For the use of Ezekiel in the Apocalypse, see Ruiz, J.-P. *Ezekiel in the Apocalypse: The Transformation of Prophetic Language in Revelation 16,17–19,10* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989). The use of Isaiah has been explored in Fekkes, J. E. *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Development* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 289–90. Fekkes defends the experiential basis of the visions, whereas Himmelfarb argues for a literary phenomenon. Himmelfarb, M. *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). As to Zechariah, see Jauhainen, M. *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, and Tonstad, S. K. *Saving God's Reputation* 17–29.

⁶⁹ Dimant, D. "Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha." M. J. Mulder and H. Sysling, eds. *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988) 381–4; Painchaud, L. "Use of Scripture in Gnostic Literature." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996) 129–46; Wold, B. G. *Women, Men, and Angels: The Qumran Wisdom Document Musar LeMevin and Its Allusions to Genesis Creation Traditions* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 62–5.

⁷⁰ In the Qumran writings, there is a parallel tendency, expressing a belief in the spirit of prophecy that continued to address God's own, in order to help them understand the ancient traditions and unfold new truths concerning their own time. VanderKam, J. C. "Authoritative Literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 5 (1998) 401.

a clear external marker. The biblical text is introduced as an object of interpretation. The aim of the writing is to explain the biblical text. This usually involves a fixed terminology and special syntactical patterns, which separate the biblical text from the author's exposition.⁷¹ Genres utilizing this category include rabbinic Midrash, Qumranic pesher, the commentaries on the Torah by Philo, and certain types of quotations in the New Testament.⁷²

The Apocalypse demonstrates a compositional rather than an expository usage of available literary material.⁷³ Its unspecific allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures are rather unmindful of the textual antecedents.⁷⁴ Since the Apocalypse does not explain the Hebrew Scriptures, it uses them to compile its story. Moyise notes that the Apocalypse may be signalling a generic preference for creativity in the use of the Hebrew Scriptures.⁷⁵ Thus, the way in which the text of the Apocalypse takes form defines the shape of the narrative, much the way a film director puts together scenes and chooses shooting angles for a film. The reader embarking on the experience of reading encounters in the composition what could be considered a guiding 'nous'.⁷⁶ The listener/reader experience evolves through the cognitive parameter of reflection – ruminating on the allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures – and progresses through the choices the text presents. The progress in visualizing and meaning construction depends on the familiarity of the listener/reader with the

⁷¹ Dimant, D. "Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha" 382 n. 16.

⁷² This would correspond to the categories of direct allusion and echo. Paulien, J. *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets: Allusions and the Interpretation of Rev 8:7–12* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1988) 175–8.

⁷³ While a handful of scholars claim to find, in the Apocalypse, a number of (anywhere from one to eleven) quotations of the Hebrew Scripture, the overwhelming majority conclude that there are none. The only 'citation' of the Hebrew Scripture occurs in 15:3, the 'song of Moses,' which seems to be a reference to Ex 15. However, the content of the 'song' is a mosaic of language from Psalms and prophets, not Exodus.

⁷⁴ Gregory Beale and Don Carson offer a representative anthology of the literature on the topic, with a bias in favour of respect for context. Beale, G. K. and D. Carson, eds. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

⁷⁵ Moyise, S. *The Old Testament in the New. An Introduction* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 126–7. See also discussion on the literary freedom of the Apocalypse in Harrington, W. J. *Revelation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008) 5–6.

⁷⁶ *Nous* (νοῦς or νόος) is a philosophical term for mind or intellect.

Scriptures alluded to, but is not restricted by them.⁷⁷

In a narrative, the impression of omniscience can be created in several ways: by cutaways to action nearby, by crosscutting diverse narrations, by following characters from one locale to another. Though this controlling power is not instantly apparent, the Apocalypse, like narrative texts in general, reveals the presence of an editorial intelligence that selects certain stretches of time for full-scale treatment, pares others down a little, presents still others in highly compressed fashion, and simply scissors out some events. This speaks for the activity of a constructing mind behind the text,⁷⁸ which accompanies and influences the reading experience. The imagistic framed narrative of the Apocalypse has cognitive appeal, and it renders the content of the text attractive and memorable.⁷⁹ A text of this form suggests that we are dealing with early Christianity not only as a historical period, but also as the context community, still evolving toward full religious self-knowledge.⁸⁰ The invisible guiding 'nous', regardless of the presence or absence of a narrator, gives the events extracted from an array of biblical and religious traditions a sense of beginning and ending, an orientation and sense of direction.⁸¹ Consequently, we can conclude that the form of the Apocalypse underscores the emerging religious self-identity at both communal and individual levels. These textual and formal factors assist in the creation of a frame for the reading experience of the Apocalypse where the form is a means to orientate, evoke sense and give direction to the

⁷⁷ For a similar kind of discussion on Matthew as a scribe, see Orton, D. E. *The Understanding Scribe: Matthew and the Apocalyptic Ideal* (London: T & T Clark, 2005) 171. This strikes a chord similar to the creation and performance of Greek tragedies, with the idea of the author as a production supervisor. Markantonatos, A. *Tragic Narrative* 6.

⁷⁸ Jean-Pierre Ruiz uses the expression from 10.4, 'Seal up what the thunders have said and do not write it down,' to exemplify narrative control and the use of rhetorical strategy as implemented by the constructor of the text. Ruiz, J.-P. "Hearing and Seeing" 94.

⁷⁹ For the appeal of imagistic modes, see McCauley, R. N. "Introduction." H. Whitehouse and R. N. McCauley, eds. *Mind and Religion: Psychological and Cognitive Foundations of Religiosity* (Lanham: Altamira, 2005) xxiv–xxv.

⁸⁰ Martin, L. H. "The Promise of Cognitive Science" 37–56.

⁸¹ Markantonatos, A. *Tragic Narrative* 5–6. Νούς is discussed in a religious philosophical context in Hemming, L. P. "Are We Still in Time to Know God? Apocalyptic, Sempiternity, and the Purpose of Experience." L. Boeve, Y. de Maeseneer, and S. van de Bossche, eds. *Religious Experience and Contemporary Theological Epistemology* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005) 159–76.

encounter with the artefact.

From the distinctive use of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Apocalypse, construction rises to the awareness of the reader. Incidentally, the reader faces a cognitive mental space where intentional selection meets individual knowledge. Thus, the reader's real-life frame is brought into a transaction with the imagistic collection in the Apocalypse, which operates together with the collective memory of each respective reading community. Therefore, a genre description loses prominence and the hermeneutical space heightens the actuality of the cognitive level. The genre of the Apocalypse is not defined through descriptive literary terminology; instead, its structural and compositional features are apprehended through the reading experience. This may also satisfy the criticism that apocalyptic is too broadly defined and therefore hopelessly elusive. The use of the Hebrew Scriptures tells about somebody using them with a 'visionary appropriation', which calls off the question of an actual vision or a clearly delineated genre of a revelatory account. Referring back to the Aristotelian causal model as a conceptual model for textual analysis, the communicative functions of the work are determined on the basis of its construction.⁸² Here I might add, on the basis of narrative encounter with the Apocalypse, that the reading, listening or visualising experience bespeaks regarding the reader as an integral element of the artefact's creation, thus leading to the notion that the authorial consciousness of the reader and the artefact are in a communicative and creative exchange.

2.4 THE APOCALYPSE AS ORAL PERFORMANCE

A feature commonly unobserved by the modern reader and, apparently, by some scholarly exegetes too, is the communal setting of ancient reading. This is in contrast to modern reading, where the reader works individually and in privacy. The Apocalypse, in its original context, would have been read aloud, performed to a community at a gathering of some sort.⁸³ It was heard as a performance by its early audience. Note the words ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες, 'he who reads and those

⁸² Kindt, T. and H. H. Müller. *The Implied Author. Concept and Controversy* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006) 36.

⁸³ Jean-Pierre Ruiz presents a hypothesis that the Apocalypse is a script for oral performance. Ruiz, J.-P. "Betwixt and Between on the Lord's Day" 222.

who hear' (1.3), a statement which covers the full range of the narrative. The listeners may have taken part in the hymns or exhortations and exaltations. They may also have had the possibility to see or perform some actual visualization of the scenes in the Apocalypse.⁸⁴ An aspect that should not go unnoticed is the importance of the length of the performance in relation to its content. Performances lasting approximately two hours are culturally common to this day throughout the world.⁸⁵

The dramatic effect created by the oral performance using first-person narration is responsible for the most of the illusion of a presence. The performing 'I' who can weave in and out of the action and undertake to tell the story from a position above the principal narrative is a feature explicit in the composition of the Apocalypse, as David Aune has noted.⁸⁶ He, furthermore, observes that dramatic public performance of early Christian apocalypses appears to have been an innovation adopting ancient literary ideals of the affinity between oratory and writing. Noteworthy is also the use of the odeon, a small building of ancient Greece and Rome for public performances of music and poetry. Ancient authors normally composed aloud, and first-person narration is a particularly appropriate device for re-enacting the original speech experience within the framework of a public performance.⁸⁷ An essential element of composing for the ear is the indisputably visual and experiential nature of the narration of the Apocalypse.

2.4.1 *Word-pictures*

To assess the significance of word-pictures in antiquity we have to turn to certain classical works. Among the majority of scholars, there is an uneasy agreement that *Peri Hypsous*, a treatise by (Pseudo-) Longinus,

⁸⁴ Ruiz, J.-P. "Betwixt and Between on the Lord's Day" 222 n. 5.

⁸⁵ Hiltinen, A. *Aristotle's Poetics, Story Design and Audience Appeal* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2002) 7–24.

⁸⁶ Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic* 51.

⁸⁷ Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic* 50. David Barr notes that the original audience encountered the Apocalypse as an aural experience, which determined both the way an apocalypse was structured and the meaning the narratees found in it. Barr, D. "The Apocalypse of John as Oral Enactment." *Interpretation* 40 (1986) 243–56. Ormond Rush suggests that the biblical documents are but one performance of living oral works. Rush, O. *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church's Reception of Revelation* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009) 99–100.

is a work from the early or mid first century CE.⁸⁸ This places one of the most informative works on ancient literary criticism and the composition of sublime and uplifting texts right into the socio-intellectual context of the Apocalypse. It is equally of interest that the treatise indicates familiarity with Hebraic tradition.⁸⁹ This is in line with the notion according to which there was interaction between different groups within ancient society. Consequently, Philodemus of Gadara sees reason to associate Longinus' treatise with the milieu of Philo Judaeus, and therefore it is possible that Philo is the philosopher to whom the last chapter of *Peri Hypsous* refers.⁹⁰ The author's metaphoric use of light, in the manner of Philo, and his unexpected citation of the creation lines from the first chapter of Genesis help attribute this work to a Hellenized Jew.⁹¹ The contribution of *Peri Hypsous* to the rhetorical tradition has been extraordinary. It succeeds in broadening our appreciation not only of ancient literary sublimity, but also of the impact of dramatic art on Greco-Roman audiences.

A companion to Longinus' work on text composition, and from about the same period, is Cicero's *De inventione*, which discusses how to make a lasting impression on hearers.⁹² Such contributions deserve to be considered in the discussion on the architectonics of the Apocalypse. Even more so the work of Quintilian, a celebrated orator and rhetorician from the latter part of the first century and an exact contemporary of the author of the Apocalypse. Quintilian's *Institutio Ora-*

⁸⁸ The Greek treatise *Peri Hypsous*, traditionally rendered in English as *On the Sublime*, occupies a unique position in the history of literary criticism. It is the sole surviving work of its author, who is known by convention as Longinus, but whose very name is in doubt. There is, in fact, no ancient reference to the tract or its influence. Its known history begins, in effect, in 1554 with the Basel publication by Francisco Robertello of the tenth-century manuscript known as the Codex Parisinus (or Parisiensis) 2036 or the Paris MS. Clark, T. *The Theory of Inspiration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) 66.

⁸⁹ *Longinus on the Sublime: The Peri Hypsous in Translations by Nicholas Boileau-Despreaux, 1674 and William Smith, 1739: Facsimile Reproductions* (Delmar: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1975) 128–9.

⁹⁰ For a summary of the speculations on the identity of the author and the date, see Conte, G. B. *The Hidden Author: An Interpretation of Petronius' Satyricon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 43–4.

⁹¹ Runia, D. T. *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

⁹² Marcus Tullius Cicero. *De Inventione*, transl. C. D. Yonge (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2004).

toria represents rhetorical theory from ancient Greece and from the heyday of Roman rhetoric.⁹³ The way Quintilian⁹⁴ exemplifies visualization as an essential aspect of sublimity is very much like Longinus' demonstration of the subject. Inspiration is not so much a result of cunning as an inherent quality in the creation of the artefact. Longinus comments that some call visualization image-production and use it for anything that suggests a thought or elicits speech. He goes on to show that rhetorical visualization serves a different purpose than its poetic counterpart: in poetry, the aim is astonishment, in oratory, clarity. Both, however, seek emotion and excitement.⁹⁵

According to the canons of the contemporaries of the author of the Apocalypse, skillfully drawn visualizations provoke a tremendous change in the narratees, moving them (from 'reason') to 'enthralment'.⁹⁶ The period witnessed a dramatic rise in the importance of rhetoric, especially through the use of word-pictures, which

⁹³ *Institutio Oratoria* is an exhaustive and pedagogically oriented treatment of rhetoric in twelve books. Many later rhetoricians, especially those of the Renaissance, derived their rhetorical theory directly from this text.

⁹⁴ Quintilian advises that an orator should powerfully envisage the events and deeply experience the emotions he is describing, in order to stir up his audience or produce in it a sense of vividness (ἐνάργεια) whereby his listeners experience his words as if they were present at the events described. He draws several examples from Virgil to illustrate the importance *ethos* and *pathos* in the rhetor's performance. Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.8, 29–36. In the antique, the production of the impressive text was regarded to involve bringing out the recourses from the inner sense. The composition was not simply writing, but also rumination, cogitation, dictation, listening, and dialogue, a gathering of voices from several places in the memory. Covino, W. A. *Magic, Rhetoric, and Literacy: An Eccentric History of the Composing Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 37–8; Remer, G. *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008) 172. However, such compositional devices as emphasis on vivid description (ἐνάργεια) were considered to result, if not in falsehood, in a distortion of the narrated events. Walbank, F. W. *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 11; Beye, C. R. *Ancient Epic Poetry: Homer, Apollonius, Virgil. With a Chapter on the Gilgamesh Poems* (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2006) 219–56.

⁹⁵ Longinus. *On the Sublime*, transl. W. H. Fyfe. In Aristotle. *Poetics*, S. Halliwell transl. and ed. Longinus. *On the Sublime*, transl. W. H. Fyfe; Demetrius. *On Style*, transl. and ed. D. C. Innes, based on W. Rhys Roberts (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995) 215–6, 223.

⁹⁶ Longinus. *On the Sublime* 215–6.

were considered to be an essential part of effective communication.⁹⁷ Apart from Longinus and Quintilian, Philo⁹⁸ endorsed 'word-pictures' as part of the skill of persuasion.⁹⁹ One of the methods by which the speaker creates word-pictures as a figure of thought is displacement and visual or 'grammatical' abnormality.¹⁰⁰ In line with Longinus and other contemporaries, the Apocalypse includes multiple layers of possible reception and engagement, unexpected narration and skillfully drawn visualizations, all of which provoke a tremendous change in the narratees, moving them from being mere viewers to absorption in the action. Any polarization of subjectivity versus objectivity thus loses relevance. The listener's awareness emerges from the numerous factors contributing to the rise of any given understanding.¹⁰¹ While exercising caution with abstractions,¹⁰² we need to work with narrative elements such as word-pictures, visualizations and means of persuasion and engagement so as to recognize what is shaping an experienced encounter with the Apocalypse.

⁹⁷ These and other rhetorical figures are described in chapters 23–7 of *Peri Hypsous*.

⁹⁸ For Philo's discussion on the supremacy of the eye as the means to understanding, see Philo. *De Abrahamo*, transl. F. H. Colson et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935) 149–53. The passage is commented in Frank, G. *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 18, 19, 122–4.

⁹⁹ An important study exploring identity, politics and culture in the Greek world of the first three centuries AD is provided by Whitmarsh, T. *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire. The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also Swain, S. *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), and Elsner, J. *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 21–48.

¹⁰⁰ Elsner, J. *Art and the Roman Viewer* 21–48.

¹⁰¹ Biblical texts witness, above all, to a relationship between the celestial and terrestrial or communal, and presuppose intersubjectivity, illocutionary acts, acts performed in saying something. Thiselton, A. C. *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: Collected Works with New Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 117–23.

¹⁰² However, theories for interpretative analysis have a tendency to lead to misconstructions, if, by insisting on abstraction, they lose touch with the artefact. Herman, L. and B. Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* 1.

2.5 HISTORICAL, NARRATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE QUALITIES

Students of narrated history have time and again found themselves confronted by the question, what makes up an objective account, a trustworthy narrative of events? A narrated history is, nonetheless, a literary work and, as such, part of the author's biography.¹⁰³ Thus, literary works have been examined in the context of their external factors: the author's life, the historical, social, cultural and economic conditions of the situation of writing. Complications arise, however, when identifying the origins of a text form, specifically in accounts describing historical events and /or religious experience. In biblical literary studies certain unease has been created by the use of imagistic elements in religious and mystic forms of narrative.¹⁰⁴ Eduard Reuss, who classifies apocalypses as 'fantasy' captures the discomfort.¹⁰⁵ Somewhat similarly, Hayden White argues that facts do not speak for themselves; historians speak for them. Consequently, the historical-literary critic must set aside a certain view of truth in favour of an understanding of historical representation through literary means. In other words, our comprehension of a historical text is virtually indistinguishable from the literarily imagined.¹⁰⁶

Literary interpretative theories such as reader response,¹⁰⁷ semiotics and deconstruction, would have had little impact on historical epistemology and the reading of religious texts, had the presumed gap between history and the imaginative aspect of a written text not been

¹⁰³ Frei, H. W. "Narrative' in Christian and Modern Reading." B. D. Marshall, ed. *Theology and Dialogue: Essays in Conversation with George Lindbeck* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990) 149–64; Lee, D. *Luke's Stories of Jesus: Theological Reading of Gospel Narrative and the Legacy of Hans Frei* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 18–28.

¹⁰⁴ Yarbrow Collins, A. "Apocalypticism and New Testament Theology." C. Rowland and C. Tuckett, eds. *The Nature of New Testament Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) 34.

¹⁰⁵ Frey, J. "Die Apokalyptik als Herausforderung der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft. Zum Problem: Jesus und die Apokalyptik." M. Becker and M. Öhler, eds. *Apokalyptik als Herausforderung der neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 29–30.

¹⁰⁶ White, H. "Historical Pluralism." *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1986) 484.

¹⁰⁷ Emphasizing that his concept has its roots in the text, Iser contrasts reader response theory with his own theory of aesthetic response, *Wirkungstheorie*. Iser, W. *The Act of Reading*. See also Holub, R. *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1984).

bridged by narrative theory.¹⁰⁸ White's studies on the historical narrative as a literary entity evoke questions about the creative process of writing in general, which is the focus in the chapter dealing with the concern about the Apocalypse reclaiming old traditions. His proposal to replace representation with semiotics, and thus, to limit factual evidence and reconfigure even the historical text as an artefact of constructed reality,¹⁰⁹ has been part of the discussion of history as literary text. New historicism considers history as not directly accessible and unitary, but as a plural continually changing construction that is repeatedly adjusted to different present purposes. White believes that histories have a poetic and linguistic structure, and that every narrative history relies on certain basic linguistic tropes. He analytically differentiates between the four tropes every historical narrative is based on: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony.¹¹⁰ According to Hayden White, no mode has a closer relation to truth than any other; thus, events can be narrated as, say, tragedies, or satires or romances – and we may add apocalypses –, and there is no way of proving that any of these is the right way of narrating.¹¹¹

Dorrit Cohn believes that there are differences between narratives at the discourse level,¹¹² and offers as an example the way fiction represents the inner life and thoughts of characters. Historiography, on the other hand, Cohn claims, does not represent the inner states of historical characters.¹¹³ Moreover, she questions all assertions for an objective text and thus negates the argument of an unbiased text often associated with biblical narratives (which tend to underscore engagement in introspection). Frank Ankersmit sides with Cohn as he expressly rejects

¹⁰⁸ According to Hayden White, a historical work is a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse, a verbal artefact, a product of a special kind of language use. Discursivity speaks for the relativity of the representation and is a function of the language used to describe, thereby constituting past events as possible objects of explanation and understanding. White, H. *Figural Realism. Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 27.

¹⁰⁹ White, H. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 1–23; White, H. *Figural Realism* 9.

¹¹⁰ White, H. *Figural Realism* 27–42.

¹¹¹ White, H. "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth." K. Jenkins. *The Postmodern History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997) 392–6.

¹¹² Cohn, D. *The Distinction of Fiction* 114.

¹¹³ Cohn, D. *The Distinction of Fiction* 117–23.

the dialectic concept of a historical experience, the experience, in which the experiencing subject has no role to play.¹¹⁴ For Ankersmit, even grand narratives have problems with subjects, multiple voices and the presence of the narrator in the text.¹¹⁵ Problematic implications of these factors for experience is worth considering, especially for religious experience in biblical narratives. For Paul Ricoeur, narrative creations are dictated by the presuppositions of everyday life. In continuation with a tradition going back to Plato, who wrestled with the role of literature in the fundamental scheme of things, Ricoeur maintains that meaning is found in the relation of human activity to temporality. He contemplates the mediation between time and narrative, between the activity of relating a story and the temporal character of human experience. Time becomes human when woven into a narrative, and narrative attains significance by becoming a condition of temporal existence. Ricoeur goes on to say that this dialectic, sense and reference, says something about the relation between language and the ontological condition of being in the world. Because we are affected by situations in the world, we have something to say; we have experience to bring to language.¹¹⁶

Literary criticism works from the assumption that text consists of a plurality of communicative modes.¹¹⁷ Describing them, Amos Wilder observes that human nature and societies are more deeply motivated by images and literary works where the element of imagination is more overwhelming than concepts.¹¹⁸ Wilder's understanding of the narrative

¹¹⁴ Ankersmit, F. *Sublime Historical Experience* 146. White, in stead, observes that authoring a historical event does not produce so much of a more comprehensive factual account as an interpretation of the facts. White, H. "Historical Emplotment" 394.

¹¹⁵ Ankersmit notes that historical experience always contains an element of recognition, whereas Rachel Brown argues that writing about ones own experience, 'self-emplotment,' is an unextraordinary feature of mental life that is a precondition of significant introspective narrative. Ankersmit, F. *Sublime Historical Experience* 152; Brown, R. "The Emplotted Self: Self-Deception and Self-Knowledge." *Philosophical Papers* 32 (2003) 279–300.

¹¹⁶ Ricoeur, P. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian Press, 1976) 20–1. Ricoeur acknowledges his indebtedness to Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger. Aristotelian teleology pervades Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics and is most obvious in his adoption of a narrative approach. The concepts of 'mythos' and 'mimesis' of Aristotle's *Poetics* form the basis for Ricoeur's account of narrative 'emplotment,' which he enjoins with the Kantian productive imagination within general theory of poetics.

¹¹⁷ Bakhtin, M. *The Dialogic Imagination* 259ff.

¹¹⁸ Wilder, A. N. *Theopoetic* 2. See also Martin, L. H. "The Promise of Cognitive Sci-

as consisting of mythopoetic language – an open language –, irreducible to one specific meaning,¹¹⁹ seems to be discomfiting to scholars who assume that descriptive or predictive accounts of events of the past and future (or timeless ideological principles) are imbedded in the narrative. Studies within this framework have generally adopted Norman Perrin's idea that the language of the Apocalypse is made up of what he calls steno-symbols, expressions restricted to one specific meaning.¹²⁰ Then again, in accordance with Schüssler Fiorenza the strength of the language is neither in its theological reasoning nor in its historical information, but in its evocative, persuasive power to compel imaginative participation. The multivalent narrative of the Apocalypse elicits emotions, feelings, and convictions as it resists conceptualization.¹²¹

2.6 THE TRAIT OF CONSTRUCTION

The challenge of the Apocalypse appears to lie neither in the interpretation of its symbolism nor in solving its structural complexity, but, at least to a certain degree, in understanding it as a medium, that is, the role appointed to it to create an impact on the reader. The Apocalypse as a literary artefact with a complex and detailed design simultaneously reminds the reader of its authoritative character and reaffirming, reassuring quality. The narrative gives the impression of spontaneity and immediacy, which easily leads an unsuspecting reader to overlook what appears to be in tension with real-life frames regarding practices

ence” 37–56.

¹¹⁹ Wilder, A. N. *Theopoetic* 79.

¹²⁰ Perrin, N. *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1976) 29–32; Perrin, N. “Interpretation of a Biblical Symbol.” *Journal of Religion* 55 (1975) 348–70. Perrin's suggestion is similar to what Philip Wheelwright calls *steno-language*. Wheelwright, P. *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962) 39. According to David Seeley, the meaning of a literal term is not dictated in a natural, immediate and direct manner by the object it refers to. The distinction between *literal* (steno) and *figurative* (poetic) is not about properties intrinsic in language but, rather, about the function of the language. Literality is a contextual function of a given cluster of language. Seeley, D. *Deconstructing the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 103–5. For prophetic and apocalyptic language and imagery, see also. Sandy, B. *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002) 103–28.

¹²¹ Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 31.

of reporting events in writing. In real-life, a person in trance or spirit rapture, caught in a vision or a dream, is, technically, unable to record directly what he or she is experiencing. However, we assume that the visualizations are catching and lifelike and establish a vivid experience, precisely because they are reported (written) immediately, in the midst of action, as the voice commands. This builds credibility of an unmediated reported experience, yet we know that this is not likely to happen while the protagonist is assumedly in a vision.

One way of analysing such paradox is to study the interaction that takes place in the Apocalypse.¹²² The narrative does not exclusively render events. Instead, the focal point lies in the relationship between the reader and the narrative form. It is a two-way communication, in which the reader and the text interact to construct action through a variety of options for characterization, time, space and focalization.¹²³ We can examine this relationship to gain an understanding of how narratives are organized to transform events in the interest of the narrator. Predicated historical events, which we may hold to be the gist of the narrative, in turn, constitute an (historical) account subject to interpretation. From the narrative point of view, actual names and place identifications and the use of culturally accurate orientation and motifs are means of establishing a real-world anchorage, with a view to providing a (simulated) narrative-external referent.

The Apocalypse employs a narrative schema simulating a narrative-external referent who tells about John experiencing the events.¹²⁴ Thus, to the reader, the Apocalypse becomes an account of an action by looking on, not a directly told visionary experience. To the reader, this serves as an affirmation of a sense of meaning in the form of entering, through apprehended real-life features, an off-stage world. It is on the strength of their own real-life experiences that contemporary readers, like early listeners/readers, can capture the Apocalypse. Accordingly, as a narrative, the Apocalypse does not function merely as a vehicle to

¹²² Crossan, J. D. *Raid on the Articulate: Cosmic Eschatology in Jesus and Borges* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) 101–2. See also what Wilder has to say of Crossan. Wilder, A. N. *The Bible and the Literary Critic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 101–25.

¹²³ The advantage of Genette's *focalisation*, over more common terms like perspective or point of view, is that while the conventional terms tend to conflate seeing and narrating, focalisation does not confuse the person who sees with the person who speaks. Bal, M. *Narratology* 101; Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse* 189–94.

¹²⁴ For a detailed discussion, see chapter 4.

present notions to an audience, but its form evokes participation.¹²⁵ The narrator John is repeatedly urged to engage the reader.¹²⁶ By using the real-life frame of recounting what has been experienced, the narrative invites the narratee into a mode of apprehension, a position where he or she, from his or her own experience, can assert and affirm the relevance of what he or she meets.¹²⁷

2.6.1 *The Necessity of Selectivity*

The Apocalypse cannot make traditions mean whatever it chooses, for the integrated text conveys experience connotations and associations that are part of its effect. Though the material may unfold in a chain of plausible social, economic, and psychological links, the primary cause for the selection still evades certainty. Thus, the narrative schema brings in elements from outside the narrative,¹²⁸ beyond the reach of the characters within the storyworld. This creates a dynamic whereby the new affects the old, the old affects the new, the external affects the internal, and vice versa, leading to two important tasks: finding ways of describing the dynamics of interaction, and considering the effect it has on the reader/narratee.

In other words, the characteristic narrative element of selectivity,¹²⁹ even at its lowest level of sequential reporting, does not aim to reproduce 'reality'. Any way that a possible world could exist is recognized because it consists of some ways in which the world is. The reader has no trouble in accessing the world of the Apocalypse because that narrated world is simply another way the world could be, and, therefore, it 'is'. Thus, I would prefer not to use the term fictionality, as opposed

¹²⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic." D. Hellholm, ed. *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 304.

¹²⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza contends that rhetoric seeks to instigate a change of attitudes and motivations; it strives to persuade, teach and engage the reader (hearer) by eliciting reactions, emotions, convictions and identifications. The evaluative criterion for rhetoric is not aesthetics but praxis. Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians." *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987) 387.

¹²⁷ Kingsbury, J. D. *Matthew as Story* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press (1988) 1–40.

¹²⁸ Aristotle. *Poetics* 1453 b 33.

¹²⁹ Deist, F. E. *The Material Culture of the Bible: An Introduction* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 61; Moore, M. B. *Philosophy and Practice in Writing a History of Ancient Israel* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006) 173–80.

to reality, in discussing invention, historical or literary. Rather, I wish to assert that fictionality and truth cannot be contrasted. Narrativity is based on an attempt to portray human experientiality in an exemplary fashion. Therefore, there is a sense in which fictionality is inherent in narrativity: the experience, as constructed in the narrative, is typically outside of real life experience, yet it has passed to the narrative account from real-life. It has been transported from real-life in its spatial and temporal wholeness, with its dimension of potentialities, to a sequence of real-life events governed by the textual potentiality of meaning. This passage from one state to another becomes most apparent when dealing with historical texts. Historical writing is fictive to precisely the extent that it, as narrative, produces a configured version of an elusive 'reality'.¹³⁰ The storyworld of biblical writers often interpenetrates with the world of their community, the real-life concerns impinging on the created narrative world.¹³¹ In whichever way we perceive the production of the Apocalypse, narratives are not windows on history, rather they are mirrors reflecting a self-contained, artistically created world.¹³² A narrative is a creation, and never corresponds exactly to the world of everyday life. Even if a writer were to try for such correlation, the need for selectivity, summary, and meaningful relationships between events would preclude mere recording.¹³³

2.6.2 Transaction

As a result, the reader experiences the narrative as a constellation, or braiding of meanings and voices.¹³⁴ For Mikhail Bakhtin, any utterance must always be an answer to a previous utterance. In order to engage in dialogue, one must be able to apprehend, internalize, and recreate the

¹³⁰ Antti Laato is aware of narrativity, or the mechanism of narrative in a textual description of reality, when he alludes to a referential world created in confrontation with reality. Laato, A. *History and Ideology in the Old Testament Prophetic Literature: A Semiotic Approach to the Reconstruction of the Historical Prophets* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1996) 53.

¹³¹ Räisänen, H. *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark*, transl. C. Tuckett (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990) 21; Telford, W. *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 27.

¹³² Porter, S. E. and C. A. Evans. *New Testament Interpretation and Methods* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 69–77.

¹³³ Barr, D. L. "Transforming the Imagination. John's Apocalypse as Story." A Lecture Presented at Wright State University, January 28, 2000.

¹³⁴ Barthes, R. *S/Z* 160.

utterances of others, which, in turn, qualifies the prior utterance to a greater or lesser degree.¹³⁵ Thus, there can be no claim to absolute originality, and the social nature of language has precedence over the image of an isolated creative mind. This can be placed within an emphasis of the role of the interpretative community, also echoed by Barthes when he observes that the reader is engaged in a necessary dialogue with the voices and texts of others.¹³⁶ Essentially, every text is informed by other texts that the reader has read, and the reader's own cultural context.

Every contribution that adds to that meaning is socially constructed, and therefore a text is a form of activity, inseparable from the wider network of social relations between writers and readers, largely unintelligible outside the social purposes and conditions in which it is embedded. Terry Eagleton's definition is, not coincidentally, very similar to Bakhtin's view that dialogue is an action which occurs between self and other.¹³⁷ Michael Holquist puts it, dialogue expresses the general condition of the speakers' addressivity, their situation not only being preceded by a language system that is always already there, but also being preceded by all of existence.¹³⁸ Because knowledge is socially constructed through the dialogue of language, Bakhtin makes it clear that a dialogue with multiple viewpoints protects against the stagnating effect of homogenous thought. Linda Flower sees the notion of equivocal as giving a vivid image of how a cognitive network, a construct of an individual mind, is also an intensely social representation. For the reader, consequently, meaning construction can be an ongoing negotiation with the presence of other voices.¹³⁹ While reading the Apocalypse, the

¹³⁵ Holquist, M. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 1990) 60.

¹³⁶ Barthes, R. *S/Z* 21. This resembles the intertextual activity Kristeva claims to occur in the context of reading. Influenced by Bakhtin, Kristeva charts a three-dimensional textual space with three coordinates of dialogue: the writer (writing subject), the narratee, and exterior texts. She describes this textual space as intersecting planes with horizontal and vertical axes: the status of a word is defined horizontally, it belongs both to the writing subject and the narratee; as well as vertically, the word is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus of the text. Each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts), in which at least one other word (text) can be read. Text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations, as the absorption and transformation of another text or texts. Kristeva, J. "Word, Dialogue, and the Novel." T. Moi, ed. *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) 37.

¹³⁷ Eagleton, T. *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) 216.

¹³⁸ Holquist, M. *Dialogism* 61.

¹³⁹ Flower, L. *The Construction of Negotiated Meaning: A Social Cognitive Theory of*

reader enters an avenue to a dialogue where the give-and-take of socially constructed meaning is signified by the interaction of multiple voices.¹⁴⁰

Sensitivity about the hermeneutical circle as an integral part of various reading processes, together with the question about what a particular interpretation is for, has concrete bearing on the outcome of every reading experience.¹⁴¹ Meir Sternberg and others make a similar point by arguing that authorial intention implies the exclusion of a form of text/reader communication.¹⁴² Jacques Ellul draws attention to the precarious nature of language with regard to scholarly studies on the Apocalypse.¹⁴³ According to Ellul, it is unfeasible to deal with the written words as such; one, simultaneously, addresses other issues as well: the question of the 'content' and the raised 'expectation' shaped by the 'encounter' with that content. One must bear in mind how the reading constantly moulds the artefact. Combined with what is unknown and new to the reader, the content of the narrative determines what the text reveals and makes known in the real-life context of reading. Most narratives, including the Apocalypse demonstrate a plentiful chain of interconnectedness and interdependence in discourse.¹⁴⁴ However, the Apocalypse does not lead to a new insight in an intellectual and logical fashion, but accomplishes it through the complex process of transfor-

Writing (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994) 98–9.

¹⁴⁰ Chance, J. B. and M. P. Horne. *Rereading the Bible: An Introduction to the Biblical Story* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2000) 12.

¹⁴¹ Räisänen, H. *Beyond New Testament Theology: A Story and a Programme* (London: SCM Press, 1990) 93–103.

¹⁴² Sternberg, M. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) 7–13; Clines, D. "Possibilities and Priorities of Biblical Interpretation in an International Perspective." *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993) 85; Davidsen, O. *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1993) 5–10.

¹⁴³ Ellul, J. *Apocalypse: The Book of Revelation*, transl. G. W. Schneider (New York: Seabury Press, 1977). See also Yarbro Collins, A. "Review of Jacques Ellul, *Apocalypse*." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978) 269–70, and Megivern, J. "Jacques Ellul's *Apocalypse*." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 11 (1981) 125–8.

¹⁴⁴ Fasching, D.J. "The Dialectic of Apocalypse and Utopia in the Theological Ethics of Jacques Ellul." F. Ferré ed. *Technology and Religion: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, Vol. 10 (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1990) 149–65. Kristeva, J. "Word, Dialogue, and the Novel" 37; Allen, G. *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000) 5; Tannen, D. *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 8–24.

mation of the reader's perspective.¹⁴⁵ In its use of traditions, there is a tension between their previous contextual definitions and the new context supplied by the text.¹⁴⁶ The old context govern the reading of the Apocalypse, however, because it is used within a new experience and the reading of the text being influenced by the readers real-life frames, as a result the reading is freed from its previous textual pier and emerged into a new context. An additional aspect in Rosenblatt's 'transactional theory' is an extended view of reader competence. Her theory allows the reader to become unique within a particular, momentary transaction in the act of reading a text.¹⁴⁷ According to Rosenblatt, the reader and the text are in a transaction, which includes the reader's community, and his or her tacit knowledge, as well as pre-expectations with regard to the formation of the experience with the artefact. The perplexing concept of language as a means to create reality, the disjunction between what words say and how they are (or are not) understood are still complicating factors in the reading experience.¹⁴⁸ In contrast,

¹⁴⁵ Countryman, L. "Reading Scripture – and Rereading It." *Anglican Theological Review* 86 (2004) 579.

¹⁴⁶ Moyise, S. *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 138.

¹⁴⁷ 'In stead of ... the dualistic, mechanistic, linear, interactional view, in which the text, ... and the personality of the reader ... can be separately analysed, with the impact of one on the other studied in a vacuum, we need to see the reading act as an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group.' Rosenblatt, L. M. "Viewpoints: Transaction Versus Interaction – A Terminological Rescue Operation." *Research in the Teaching of English* 19 (1985) 100. See also Rosenblatt, L. M. "The Transactional Theory: Against Dualisms." *College English* 55 (1993) 377–86.

¹⁴⁸ Rosenblatt, L. M. "Towards a Transactional Theory of Reading." *Journal of Reading Behaviour* 1 (1969) 31–49. Richard Rorty argues that language goes all the 'way down,' in the way of preceding experience. Rorty, R. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 75. Rorty is challenged by Frank Ankersmit who claims that, at the end of the road, writers end up in experience, which exists before, after, or beyond words. Ankersmit, F. *Sublime Historical Experience* 79. According to Yuri Lotman, it is not enough that writer and reader use the same natural language; there must also be a common linguistic experience, common memory and common understanding of norms, references and pragmatics. The identity of the transmitted and received texts is relative. Lotman, Y. M. *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, transl. Ann Shukman (London: Tauris, 2001) 13. See also Fitzgerald, J. and J. W. Cunningham. "Mapping Basic Issues for Identifying Epistemological Outlooks." B. K. Hofer and P. R. Pintrich, eds. *Personal Epistemology: The Psychology of Beliefs about*

approaches that wish to fix the interpretation of the Apocalypse either by genre definition, by authorial or text intention, or by ideological agendas¹⁴⁹ tend to aim at a singular outcome of the reading process.¹⁵⁰

Knowledge and Knowing (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001) 221–30.

¹⁴⁹ Brevard Childs and James Sanders raise common questions of the canonical context, although their answers differ from each other sharply. Childs, B. S. *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM Press, 1984) 18–33; Sanders, J. A. *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984) 12–6. See also Ward, T. *Word and Supplement: Speech Acts, Biblical Texts, and the Sufficiency of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 238–62.

¹⁵⁰ Heikki Räisänen pushes for an ‘opening up’ of biblical studies. See Scholz, S. “Standing at the Crossroads with Räisänen’s *Program*: Toward a Future of Biblical Studies in Post-Biblical Societies.” T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele, eds. *Moving beyond New Testament Theology? Essays in Conversation with Heikki Räisänen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 164–7.

CHAPTER THREE

APOCALYPTICALITY: AN INTEGRATING FUNCTION

In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.¹

By dealing with the formal features of the Apocalypse, Chapter Two framed apocalyptic comprehension through its literariness. This chapter integrates those traits with reflections on alterity conveyed by the imagistic. Thus this chapter draws together the traits that lead to the decision for the cognitive approach of this study and for proposing the term ‘apocalypticity’ as framing apocalyptic comprehension. In this chapter, the focus is on the encounter with the ‘other’ as an ordering space of the world in the Apocalypse. This leads to an exploration of the imagistic in addition to orality and literariness that prompted the two previous chapters. Questions around experientiality and reading frames suggest that exegetical discussions of biblical texts² have reduced the imagistic medium to a linear argumentation, or to a narrativization of a chronological set of events, without acknowledging the reading experience. This chapter also shows how the traditional exegetical discipline is not particularly interested in the various ways in which the imagistic of the Apocalypse and its readers interrelate, to build, in the realm of cognition and emotion, a consciousness of the ‘other.’ Exegetes seem to be oblivious to Foucault’s remark that discourse determines the ordering space within which living, thinking, writing, reading and knowing are actualized.³

¹ This is an extract from T. S. Eliot’s “East Coker”, one of the set of four poems derived from *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* by St. John of the Cross, the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic, and titled *Four Quartets*. In *Four Quartets*, the past lends a momentary framework to facilitate the experience of what is present and unfolding, the old rediscovered and renewed. Johnston, W. *The Mysticism of The Cloud of Unknowing* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000) 162–6.

² Exegetic discussion has concentrated on authorship, origin, content, reception, grammar and composition. Gaddis, J. *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 17, 39–40, 43.

³ Foucault employed ‘episteme’ to describe a system of conditions within which we operate as researchers and individuals. Foucault, M. *The Order of Things: An Archeol-*

A Flemish manuscript dating from around 1400 presents a full-page 'image-explosion' of all the twenty-two chapters of the Apocalypse. This seems to represent a natural relationship with the artefact of the Apocalypse. It demonstrates how engaging with the narrative of the Apocalypse results in producing exegetic images. The point here is not whether such visual constructions tie the reception of the narrative to a particular view. The exegetic images and several other existing illustrations are significant because they tell about the basic function of the visualizations in the Apocalypse. The narration works through the pictures and translates both ways, from narration to a picture-world and from the visualized setting back to narration. It is worth considering how the images awaken a mental and cognitive process of meaning creation. The visualization creates a striking effect of a spectacle, which, in turn, easily brings to mind a narrative. Surprisingly, there is little need for its actual textual expression.⁴ The visualized conflict scenarios with super-human dimensions, usually referred to as the apocalyptic element of the Apocalypse, connect with the reader's tacit knowledge about the transcendental otherness. Real-life frames enable that connection because the visualization, so to speak, brings order into the range of experience and emotion. This feature of imagistic awareness in the Apocalypse is an additional cognitive perspective or communicative process⁵ to what is predominantly understood as apocalyptic, which I prefer to define as the quality of 'apocalypticity'. My hypothesis is that reader/narratees experience the imagistic medium as conveying knowledge of others that they themselves narrativize. Apocalypticity is a particular narrativizing relationship with the imagistic reality of the Apocalypse. It occurs when the sublime and the spectacular meet and define experience. This observation relates to a shift of focus from theological preoccupation with the Apocalypse to an interest in its overall communicative aspects.⁶

ogy of the Human Sciences (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) xxii; Foucault, M. *The Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972) 128–31.

⁴ Camille, M. "Visionary Perception and Images of the Apocalypse in the Later Middle Age." R. K. Emmerson and B. Bernard McGinn. *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) 281–2; Duffy, E. *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240–1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) 171.

⁵ Brown, D. *God and Mystery in Words – Experience through Metaphor and Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 127.

⁶ Social scientific observations have caused a similar shift to a new socio-rhetorical awareness. Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic"

Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase 'the medium is the message,' meaning that the form of a medium embeds itself in the message, creating a symbiotic relationship by which the medium influences the way the message is perceived and the meaning attached to it. Just as the media, as a means of mass communication, conveys meaningful content, it, in addition to the content for which it is a channel, conveys its own significance. McLuhan points to the potentiality of the media to construct a world of its own, and he gives the medium an equal or even more prominent role than it has as a mediating instrument. The medium is part of the content⁷ because its distinctive form shapes our experience and eventual consciousness about the message.

Ralph Korner and Felise Tavo, among others, have pointed out, with a degree of scorn, that a distinguishing feature of the Apocalypse scholarship is that the book's possible structurations are as numerous as its researchers.⁸ This underscores the otherness of the text, possibilities within its folds an otherness that functions as a heuristic discovery on the part of the reader/narratee that need not necessarily be rational.⁹ Thus, apocalypticity, as an experience arrived at through the narrative medium, transposes the reader/narratee to another world and purports to mediate God's presence into the person's own world. In contrast to a genre that builds on rather fixed criteria and does not touch experientiality, apocalypticity pertains to the reader/narratee's expe-

295; Räisänen, H. "The Clash between Christian Styles of Life in the Book of Revelation." D. Hellholm, H. Moxnes, and T. Karlsen Seim, eds. *Mighty Minorities? Minorities in Early Christianity – Positions and Strategies: Essays in Honour of Jacob Jervell on His 70th Birthday, 21 May 1995* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) 151–66; Stenström, H. *The Book of Revelation: A Vision of the Ultimate Liberation or the Ultimate Backlash? A Study in 20th Century Interpretations of Rev 14:1–5 with Special Emphasis on Feminist Exegesis* (Uppsala: Teologiska institutionen, Uppsala University, 1999).

⁷ In his introduction to the thirtieth anniversary edition of Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, Lewis H. Lapham ponders whether our current culture, in translating entire lives into the spiritual form of information, is shaping a single global consciousness. McLuhan, M. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994) xx–xi.

⁸ Korner, R. J. "And I Saw ... An Apocalyptic Literary Convention." *Novum Testamentum* 42 (2000) 160–2; Tavo, F. "The Structure of the Apocalypse" 47; Tavo, F. *Woman, Mother, and Bride: An Exegetical Investigation into the 'Ecclesial' Notions of the Apocalypse* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007) 34–45.

⁹ Pyysiäinen, I. "Intuition, Reflection, and the Evolution of Traditions." T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele, eds. *Moving beyond New Testament Theology? Essays in Conversation with Heikki Räisänen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005) 292–4.

rience of the large-scale and the indescribable. Thus, it implies things that reader/narratees (or viewers) understand as the ultimately other, which can only be imagined. As a medium, apocalypticity attempts to make biblical scenes, which are subjected to our imagistic perception, come alive as part of spectacles from opposing worlds. These opposing worlds are noetically reconcilable in a potentially unified imaginative experience. As Northrop Frye notes, ‘in imaginative thought there is no real knowledge of anything but similarities (ultimately identities): knowledge of differences is merely a transition to a new knowledge of similarities.’¹⁰

It does not seem to have been unintentional that illustrators of the Apocalypse in the fifteenth century pictured Augustine’s attempt to explain the mind’s apprehension of the mystery of the infinite God as a child attempting to empty the sea into a small hole in the sand.¹¹ After all, Augustine, accepting the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse, was responsible for its inclusion in the New Testament canon. Equally noteworthy is the fact that he was also responsible for the Latin Fathers’ reading the Apocalypse strictly as symbolism, not as history or prophecy; therefore his view that John’s visions are not of the highest intellectual but of the penultimate spiritual type.¹² As for the Greek Fathers, they read the Apocalypse allegorically, as suggestive of the spiritual struggles within the individual’s soul. Thus, the earliest reception of the document is closer to its inherently communicative concerns than to the later theological queries.

¹⁰ Denham, R. D., ed. *Northrop Frye’s Notebooks and Lectures on the Bible and Other Religious Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 215.

¹¹ Evans, M. *The Sforza Hours* (London: British Library, 1992) 17, 41, 45.

¹² Augustine et al. *On Genesis* (New York: New City Press, 2002) 493, 495. Augustine was aware of that contemplation is embedded in descriptions of religious experience conditioned by beliefs and intentions, saturated as they are with complex descriptive cultural concepts. He pondered on the complexity of the vision as a means of cognition, since the likeness of things can cause illusions and bring about mistaken judgements. Caviness, M. “Images of Divine Order and the Third Mode of Seeing.” *Gesta* 22 (1982) 99–120; Matthews, G. B. “Knowledge and Illumination.” E. Stump and N. Kretzmann, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 171–85, 176, 183.

3.1 IMAGINING THE 'OTHER'

The concern of biblical-historical scholarship has been about identifying historical data upon which to build reconstructions of the original reality influencing the writers of documents, not the readers. Indeed, the writing situation as such provides a clue to what issues the readers needed to hear in their socio-historical reality. Bruce Malina observes that, in general, readers read in accordance with the social and cultural scenarios they are able to construct in their minds. A somewhat informed modern reader/narratee defamiliarizes¹³ his own setting and reads/hears the narrative of the Apocalypse from the perspective of a constructed ancient Mediterranean cultural context.¹⁴ As regards the unfamiliar scenarios of the narrative, the reader/narratee counters them by re-constructing, whereby meaning emerges as a blend or conceptual integration of what was foreign in the defamiliarized and the familiar. The integrated understanding forms a structure that is distinct from its three contributors and may not exist in actuality – an imaginative creation that can be at odds with objective reality.

The modern reader's approach to an ancient text from his or her altered perspective has always been problematic.¹⁵ Vernon Robbins points out that social-scientific interpreters suppose that audiences perceive the social and cultural scenarios in narratives when they come upon an entry point into an environment they are able to construct out of their real-life perspectives, personal, collective, cultural or historical.¹⁶ The entry point, however, involves a conscious defamiliarizing and (co) experiencing, which are prompted and enhanced by both the reader/

¹³ 'Defamiliarization' was coined by Viktor Shklovskij to describe the purpose of art to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The purpose of art is to make, through its technique, objects *unfamiliar*, to increase the difficulty and thus the length of perception. Crawford, L. "Victor Shklovskij: Différance in Defamiliarization." *Comparative Literature* 36 (1984) 209–19.

¹⁴ Malina, B. "Reading Theory Perspective: Reading Luke-Acts." J. Neyrey, ed. *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrikson, 1991) 3–23.

¹⁵ Rainfand, C. "A Matter of Perspective: The Social Framing of Narrative Meaning." B. Reitz and S. Rieuwerts, eds. *Anglistentag (1999) Mainz. Proceedings* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2000) 389–401.

¹⁶ Robbins, V. "Social-Scientific Criticism and Literary Studies" 284–5. See also Byrskog, S. *Story as History – History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 12–4.

narratee and the narrative form. Defamiliarization and (co)experience, whether they occur together or separately, due to removal in social location or time and even for the same reader/narratee at different occasions, result in a variable relationship between the experience and the signification. This implies that a given experience of the Apocalypse may not be repeatable.

An essential trait of the visual characteristic of the Apocalypse is that, in order to stage images and events, it uses dramatic language. To fully appreciate this aspect, one must explore the possibilities of the Apocalypse as a live performance. Performance literature, including religious performance literature, involves the emotional engagement of the audience, and insights about it emerge from the social or religious context of the audience more than from that of the producer.¹⁷ This remains the case even when the available subject of study is restricted to written texts, like when Greek tragedies, written for the stage, are read and studied silently in textual form only.

Imagining specific socio-historical circumstances for a performance event intensifies our reception of the Apocalypse.¹⁸ A noteworthy change in the understanding of the socio-historical frame has its impact on the experience of reading the Apocalypse. There is a striking irony linked to the interpretation of the Apocalypse in relation to the Roman Empire. For centuries, the Apocalypse has seemed to evince nothing but contempt for Rome and that, in turn, has driven interpreters to an ardent study of its society. However, newly accumulated knowledge about the Roman societal system replaces scorn and contempt for imperial brutality with an interest in the rights within imperial citizenship.¹⁹ This shift in the perception of the assumed setting also affects the experience of the Apocalypse.²⁰

¹⁷ Rosalind, T. "Performance Literature and the Written Word: Lost in Transcription?" *Oral Tradition* 20 (2005) 1–6.

¹⁸ Rhoads, D. "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Biblical Studies." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36 (2006) 118–33, 164–84.

¹⁹ Vaage, L. E., ed. *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity* (Waterloo: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 2006).

²⁰ Historical and social-scientific analyses of the Apocalypse have tended to separate the work and its first audience, whether seen as a persecuted minority or a socially ostracized sect, from Roman culture. Without disputing this but taking a rather different perspective, Frilingos regards the Apocalypse as a cultural product of the Roman Empire. Frilingos, C. *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

3.1.1 *The Spectacular*

Part of the defamiliarization and re-evaluation of the assumed historical context is to be credited to the findings of Christopher Frilingos concerning the socio-cultural significance of viewing in Roman society. The readers and narratees of the Apocalypse, living in the Roman Empire, from the emperor down to Jewish or Christian origin, all were familiar with the idea of being themselves participants in an Empire that, in turn, appeared to them as a spectacle. One of the functions of grand spectacles is to build communities and characterize communal identity. In Rome, an essential feature of the spectacles was constant and subtle crossings of the boundary between being a viewer and being viewed.²¹ Viewing and being viewed constituted a means of making sense of social existence. In his treatise *De Spectaculis*, Tertullian observed that the attitude of theatricality, *videri et videre*, to see and be seen, was a prominent feature of social and public life.²²

On the basis of what we know about the place the great spectacles, not least the games in the arena, occupied in the Roman world we may be justified to argue that the extent to which they affected the choice of the Apocalypse's visionary presentation has not received due attention in the literary analysis. The audience of the Apocalypse was accustomed to staged hunts of wild animals, gladiatorial games, execution of prisoners of war and criminals, and to the imperial cult acting out the domination of the 'other'.²³ Frilingos argues that the Apocalypse calls attention to the risk and allure of participation in a show, especially in a society that emphasized the careful scrutiny of one's friends, enemies, and self. Ancient spectators, Frilingos notes, whether seated in an arena or standing at a distance, frequently discovered that they themselves had become part of the performance.²⁴ This is essentially what Rome is remembered for. Take the infamous scene where Julius Caesar, in a meeting of the Senate, received a scroll revealing his destiny, but never took the time to read it. Instead, he proceeded to give the speech he had prepared to the assembled Senate, but remained unaware of the actual

²¹ Frilingos, C. *Spectacles of Empire* 35–8.

²² Tertullian. *De Spectaculis* 25; Chase, R. M. "De Spectaculis." *The Classical Journal* 23 (1927) 107–20; Kyle, D. *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1998) 21 n. 8.

²³ Kyle, D. *Spectacles of Death* 3.

²⁴ Frilingos, C. *Spectacles of Empire* 59–60.

nature of what was taking place – the setting of the scene for his destruction. Caesar's fate illustrates the alteration so typical for the arena between viewing and being viewed, being subject and object. Similarly, in the Apocalypse, the condemned are able to view their own execution at a distance as they watch Babylon burning (18.10,15,17).

The visual culture of the ancient Roman world, which bears clear similarities to our present situation, is most likely an essential component shaping the imagistic world of the Apocalypse.²⁵ From a literary point of view, myth, legend and history mix endlessly in the biblical narrative, creating a literary experience worth considering.²⁶ An example of the influence of the spectacular in meaning creation is dealt with in David Thomas' discussion on how the historical and mythological contexts mix with real-life frames. According to Thomas, in 19.11–21 that draws on the Hebrew Scriptures, those who heard the description of the rider on a white horse would have found it difficult not to think of the triumph of redeeming conquerors as portrayed in the legend of Nero redivivus, the Oracle of Hystapses, or the Bahman Yasht. The scene presents, in one unified paradigm, Christ as a triumphant divine warrior and as a great king.²⁷ Included in this paradigm of war triumph is the Roman custom of executing prisoners of war after the triumph parade (19.21).²⁸

Framing the type of experience a reader has when encountering the Apocalypse is dependant upon historical evidence that informs the narratees' real-life frames. Consequently, other elements present in the narrative come into play, are 'heard', or fall into place. With each new information, or historical evidence, cognitive frames are shaped, altered, flavoured. This can result from gathering new experience about Mediterranean first-century society through historical evidence, dramatized documentaries, filmatized epics, or through reading communities.

The revised socio-historical frame shows life in Rome as being one of peace, plenty and tolerance. In addition, social-scientific and historical studies on the origins of distinctive religions in the Mediterranean

²⁵ Frilingos, C. *Spectacles of Empire* 95–7.

²⁶ Miles, J. *God. A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) 13; Hallbäck, G. "How to Read an Apocalypse. Deconstruction and Reconstruction." *Studia Theologica* 47 (1993) 91.

²⁷ Thomas, D. A. *Revelation 19 in Historical and Mythological Context* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008) 147.

²⁸ Thomas, D. A. *Revelation 19 in Historical and Mythological Context* 158.

world trace their revelatory texts to a common practice and cultural frame.²⁹ Reconstructions of the models of first century Mediterranean society compel our reassessment of the sociocultural³⁰ reality within which the Apocalypse unfolds. Consequently, the mental landscape favours a picture of Mediterranean first-century culture of shared origins and permeable boundaries.³¹

Several factors, as presented above and as will be dealt with in Chapter Seven, suggest that the traditional view of the sociocultural framework of the Apocalypse should be revised: i) the valid refutation of the Boussetian Hellenism/Judaism dichotomy;³² ii) Leonard Thompson's findings on Christians living an ordinary life of citizens under a rule of justice rather than under persecution; iii) Christopher Frilingos' examples of the familiarity with stage and the appeal of spectacles in the Roman society; iv) the familiarity with Longinus' rhetorical teaching and classical literature; v) the uncomplicated relation, exposed in Byzantine studies, between state and religion, and preceding the western mentality of separation between the two. Locating the Apocalypse in a society of broad cultural interchange, rather than among exclusive groupings, sheds new light on the document. On this basis, attention is directed to how, in the reading process, meaning is embedded in social systems,

²⁹ Among others, L. Hoffman has shown that competing religions shared a cultural backdrop although in their liturgy they declared the commonly accepted boundaries of a religious outlook, that is, censoring themselves in, and, at the same time, preserving the boundaries of their own integrity by censoring out those cultural characteristics they chose not to accept. Hoffman, L. "Censoring in and Censoring out: A Function of Liturgical Language." J. Gutman, ed. *Ancient Synagogues: The State of Research* (Mishoul: Scholars Press, 1981) 22–3; Hoffman, L. *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 149–71. In his analysis of revelatory texts, Smith arrives at a similar conclusion. Smith, M. "Observations on Hekhalot Rabbati." A. Altman, ed. *Biblical and Other Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963) 154. See also Eilior, R. "Mysticism, Magic, and Angelology: The Perception of Angels in Hekhalot Literature." *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 1 (1993/94) 3–53.

³⁰ In order to overcome some of the lapses of previous scholarship, V. Robbins argues for a socio-rhetorical model of textual communication. Robbins, V. "Social-Scientific Criticism and Literary Studies" 274–89.

³¹ Eilior, R. "Mysticism, Magic, and Angelology" 3–53; Boustani, R. S. *Martyr to Mystic: Rabbinic Martyrology and the Making of Merkavah Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 101; Alexander, P. S. "Hellenism and Hellenization" 63–80.

³² Stuckenbruck, L. T. and W. E. S. North. *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 5–8.

shared and understood by its participants.³³ The reading of the Apocalypse takes place within a changed framework that does not any longer manifest contempt for Rome. As a whole, rather, the narration of the Apocalypse, through its rhetoric, with images suggesting the enormity of the Empire's role in the narrative, reflects an experience that includes acknowledgement of the greatness of Rome.

3.1.2 *Sequels to Repeated Readings*

Returning to the Apocalypse in repeated readings one finds out that it creates every time a new experience – although the storyline remains the same. The narrative changes because its parts combine differently, according to the reader's changed real-life encyclopaedia.³⁴ From the cognitive narratological point of view, the artefact's 'encyclopaedia', as Umberto Eco puts it, is only part of the cognitive frames furnishing the dramatic world. Instead, the reader finds himself or herself considering all that there 'is'. It would be misleading to suggest that the narratees could avoid propositional knowledge about the characters and the narrated world they inhabit, and thus be innocent readers. On the contrary, they draw on the knowledge acquired anywhere, and do it in an extremely flexible way that is not limited to the boundaries of the storyworld. However, the function of the encyclopaedia of the narrative is sometimes to contradict its actual world counterpart. As the reader moves from the factual known world to the unknown world of the narrative he or she modifies his or her idea of the realm of certainty. Nonetheless, the narrated and the actual world encyclopaedias do not exclude but rather complement each other. This happens up to the point where realistic frames become tenuous and shrink to notions of malleable or inconstant characters, settings and events.³⁵ In real-life, there are essentially no ideal readers, as Eco has demonstrated with readers of his books, who repeatedly brought personal experience to bear on their reading.³⁶ Eco looks at a text as being essentially com-

³³ For reading scenarios, see Malina, B and R. L. Rohrbaugh. *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 10–4.

³⁴ Eco, *Role*, 17–23. The term 'encyclopaedia' has become to describe the elements included in the construction of a narrated world.

³⁵ Fludernik, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 273.

³⁶ Eco shows how impossible it is, even for a willing reader, to produce a reading outside his/her own personal framework. Eco, U. *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994) 9–10.

plete, but still remaining open to a continuous generation of internal relations the reader uncovers and selects. The narrative text may be complete, but its reading is not. In fact, the artefact is the medium that supplies parameters for appropriation, and yet guards its incompleteness – parallel to the impact that framing has on perception.

According to possible-worlds semantics, narratives are possible worlds. However, in some essential features they differ disturbingly from, or are even contrary to, the formalized systems known by that name in logical semantics. One of the most troubling contrarities is that the possible worlds of logical semantics are complete, but those of literature are not.³⁷ Philosophers and literary theorists who formulated possible-worlds semantics have accepted the theorem of incompleteness almost unanimously. Texts evoke, or calls into existence possible characters, who inhabit its possible world.³⁸ This does not mean that they are simply reducible to words. Their reader brings into the reading a comprehension of what is on the page, what is to be expected and what will make sense. These possibilities do not simply emerge from the text itself; rather, the text seems to be capable of holding more than one mode of conception.³⁹ As a matter of fact, texts can be repositories of a plurality of alternate possible worlds. Imagistic perceptions are detachable from the originating text; they can be referred to by other texts, they can undergo culturalization, by which they become part of the general cultural discourse of a society.⁴⁰ This is also true of the char-

³⁷ The *possible worlds* concept, the idea that the world could be different, is rooted in the pragmatic theory of truth and the accompanying notion of fictionality. Rayn, M.-L. *Narrative as Virtual Reality* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001) 99–105; Ronen, R. *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Klaver, E. “Possible Worlds, Mathematics, and John Mighton’s *Possible Worlds*.” *Narrative* 14 (2006) 45–63.

³⁸ Ronen, R. *Possible Worlds* 108–43; Eco, U. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979) 217–22.

³⁹ Barthes maintains that meanings of a word do not constitute singularity, nor are they construed in isolation. Therefore, connotation alone, at best, tells only half the story of meaning-interpretation. If a word carries several connotations, there has to be some force to put them in motion, to shatter the word. This momentum is generated by the particular sequence in which words are situated. A text contains discrete reading units connected by intersecting avenues, which give it the form of a network. The task of the reader is to navigate the network and activate the associations in a creative event. Barthes, R. *S/Z* 10–1.

⁴⁰ The question then arises: How does the author, having a distinct understanding of the various roles in his narrated world, express this to the reader and create a por-

acters of the Apocalypse, e.g. of the Beast and the apocalyptic riders, who appear in Western literature from Tolkien's fantasy novels to rock lyrics.

The reading constantly shapes and reshapes the reader. Therefore, the reading appears to take place within an ongoing transformation of perspective. Tina Pippin argues that any act of reading is a sequel to every previous reading. She describes the Apocalypse as spinning round and round in constant sequels to previous readings and in interpretive gestures.⁴¹ I would add that the sequels extend into real-life frames and into the perception of readers' construct of reality.

3.1.3 *Staged 'as if'*

The Apocalypse crosses one more boundary that frames the reader's experience: it stimulates attitudes toward an unreal world, the unfolding of which leads to the temporary displacement of the narratee's own reality. In the Apocalypse, the real and the possible coexist, which creates a matrix for the hopeful to emerge. Its passing nature would remain shapeless were it not, in essence, the transformation of something already existing. Both the constructed nature of the Apocalypse, as noted earlier on in the discussion of selecting and reusing traditions, and its actual references⁴² are difficult to place within an actual life frame. This is in part due to the fact that the composition of the Apocalypse is based on a wide range of literary traditions, demonstrated in numerous studies of its likely sources and rich intertextuality.

The impressions the narration creates are as varied as the imaginable. The story is presented as if it were a visible, audible experience. While literal sources are given no credit, the product is described as being received from God: statements like 'God gave him to show his

trait? Watt, I. "Realism and the Novel Form." R. Scholes, ed. *Approaches to the Novel: Materials for a Poetics* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1966) 96–7; Culpepper, R. A. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983) 103.

⁴¹ Pippin, T. *Apocalyptic Bodies: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image* (London: Routledge, 1999) 1–2.

⁴² I use referentiality to suggest that there exist 'interpretive' communities that read texts in their own specific fashion and cannot help doing so. Each community-specific reading is, therefore, correct for that community, and no reading can be considered truer than any other. Referentiality should not be confused with reading in the same way or arriving at the same results. Even if reading communities experience the text in similar ways, due to dissimilarities in referentiality, there will still be marked variance.

servants' (1.1) and 'These are the true words of God' (19.9) are given final acceptance by the same authority: 'He who dwells on the throne said write this, for these words are trustworthy and true' (21.5). Stephen O'Leary describes the narrator as intentionally downplaying his role in the narrative in order to camouflage the Apocalypse as a document of its own interpretive construction.⁴³ Alternatively, the revealed word is transformed into script controlling the reader, as Robert Royalty remarks.⁴⁴ These are valid comments, for they point out the fact that were the Apocalypse to disclose its sources and place itself in direct dialogue with external contexts it would counter-effect the unique 'as if' experience. If the Apocalypse were transparent about its structuration, we could compare the effect to a poorly directed movie where the viewer is aware about the moves of the cinematographer or the director.

Narratives are generally intentional and suggestive, which inevitably binds the narration into a relationship with its audience. If we implicitly regard the naming, signifying and imaging of experiences present in the narration as a reflection of the historical background of the narrator, we disregard the selective engagement with the 'givens of experience' made by the narratee, as well as the pursuit of meaning undertaken by both the narrator and the narratee amid a maze of alternatives. Experiential actuality penetrates our narrative worlds in their seemingly imagistic inventions. With regard to this complex issue of beyond text referentiality, literary critics are inclined to look for 'what is written' instead of 'what is written about' in a given text. This tends to mean attending to the text without questions about its reading in its diverse contexts and references. The fact that narratives, by their nature, are not transparent about historical facts does not mean absence of links with human experience. The very act of reading involves a correlation of text and life and therefore some text referentiality from the outset of the act. The issue is relevant against the background of reader sedimentation of inherited frames of perception and interpretation, which are further crystallized through the reading process.⁴⁵

⁴³ O'Leary, S. *Arguing the Apocalypse* 77–8.

⁴⁴ Royalty, R. M. "Don't Touch This Book!" 282–99.

⁴⁵ Barr, D. *Tales of the End* 165; Duff, P. *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 14–6; Koester, C. *Revelation and the End of All Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 54–69; Yarbrow Collins, A. "The Book of Revelation." B. McGinn, J. J. Collins, and S. Stein, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*. Vol 1: *The Origins of Apocalypticism*

Stephen Pattemore raises the question of correlation of text and life and makes the point that the Apocalypse, as we take into consideration its literary characteristics, stands for a crafted version of communication or communications, in order to give an appearance of real communication.⁴⁶ Similarly, the apocalyptic media aim at bringing out hidden realms of given realities that include both the real and the possible, while maintaining the difference between them. This is a process denied to us in real-life; it can only be staged in the form of the 'as if.'

3.2 PRISMATIC REFLECTIONS

An intriguing quality of the Apocalypse is its ability to evoke in the reader possibilities of a variety of reflections. According to David Hellholm, the Apocalypse makes use of narrative levels of hierarchical embedding.⁴⁷ This technique is one variety of the literary type of revelatory writing, which combines oracular prophetic writing with mythological sub-genres.⁴⁸ The outcome is an architecture of text that offers the reader a significant challenge to guide the narratee to what is to become a shared experience of the text. In other words, the reader is forced to reconstruct text internal events and actions, a strategy that fosters deliberate narrativization by the reader/narratee.⁴⁹ The same activity extends to the referential frame and encourages individual involvement with the artefact. Surprisingly, inadequate knowledge about the narrative context and a possible lack of literary competence by the reader does not necessarily hinder the construction of a desired narra-

in *Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 2002) 390–403; Maier, H. *Apocalypse Recalled: The Book of Revelation after Christendom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) 30–9; Friesen, S. J. "Sarcasm as a Socio-literary Strategy in Revelation." D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 2005) 127–46; Friesen, S. J. "Myth and Symbolic Resistance in Revelation 13." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004) 281–313; Friesen, S. J. "The Beast from the Earth: Revelation 13:11–18 and Social Setting." D. Barr, ed. *Readings in the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 2003) 49–64.

⁴⁶ Pattemore, S. *The People of God in the Apocalypse. Discourse, Structure and Exegesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 52.

⁴⁷ Hellholm, D. "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre" 43–4.

⁴⁸ Hellholm, D. "Methodological Reflections on the Problem of Definition of Generic Texts." J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth, eds. *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Conference* (Sheffield: Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 135–63.

⁴⁹ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 288.

tive encounter. Thus, Rosenblatt is dismissive of Eric Hirsch's endeavour to establish a 'correct' reading in terms of authorial intention. She counters with reception theory, by suggesting that the 'life' of a work is not its own but a function of the changing life-material, which narratees throughout history have brought to the artefact.⁵⁰ This is one aspect of the situatedness of reading⁵¹ leading to a variety of 'correct answers.'

As pointed out in Chapter Two, Hanson's reading frame for an apocalyptic artefact as a product of a socially deprived and possibly alienated religious fringe group is insufficient. The social realities of the primary group or movement that cherished the Apocalypse were complex, encompassing psychological, social, religious, economic, and political factors. To be sure, Hanson's reading frame, however limited, is not delimiting,⁵² for it is invariably related to text referentiality: the personal concepts of reader/narratees vis-à-vis the text. Hanson used the sociological models of Karl Mannheim and Max Weber to support his thesis,⁵³ which includes a description of how an ideology is transferred to a new and radically altered vision of the world.⁵⁴ It is based on the hypothesis that whenever, due to the disintegration of life-sustaining socioreligious structures and their supporting myths,⁵⁵ a group experiences alienation they create a new symbolic universe to replace the one dominant in the social system responsible for their alienation.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Hirsch, E. D. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) 209; Rosenblatt, L. M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* 121.

⁵¹ Rosenblatt, L. M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* 18–9.

⁵² For discussion on Hanson's approach, see Matlock, R. B. *Unveiling the Apocalyptic Paul* 262–9.

⁵³ Hanson, P. D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*.

⁵⁴ Hanson, P. D. "Jewish Apocalyptic against its Near-Eastern Environment" *Revue Biblique* 78 (1971) 34; Webb, R. L. "Apocalyptic: Observations on a Slippery Term" 115–26.

⁵⁵ Hanson, P. D. "Jewish Apocalyptic" 50; Hanson, P. D. "From Prophecy to Apocalyptic: Unresolved Issues." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 15 (1980) 3–6; Albrektson, B. *History and the Gods* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1967).

⁵⁶ Hanson, P. D. "Apocalypse, Genre, and Apocalypticism" 30–1. While reading Hanson, it is worth at least keeping in mind Koch's concern that, instead of the historical apocalyptic being explored, contemporary ideas are projected back and imposed upon the apocalyptic writers. Koch, K. *Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (London: SCM Press, 1972) 13–7.

3.2.1 *Experience of Cognitive Dissonance*

A number of scholars have attempted to establish the Apocalypse in the social world of the time of its writing. John Gager⁵⁷ and Adela Yarbro Collins⁵⁸ presume a socio-historical situation characterized by relative deprivation, with felt or believed oppression as the mindset of the producers and readers of the work. Yarbro Collins suggests apocalyptic literature reflects a tension between experience and consciousness,⁵⁹ concerned with a mental crisis, a situation to which the external world can offer no solution. This implies not only that worldly experience is negative, but also that it contradicts with what should be. It presupposes a state of cognitive dissonance, a clash between experience and expectation.⁶⁰ Robert Royalty and Paul Duff see that the tension is experienced within the Christian community rather than between Christians and the surrounding society.⁶¹ However, they do not probe into basics such as what would make apocalyptic different from a common human experience of cognitive dissonance, both among groups and within individuals. If narrative is a means of dealing with negative emotions – aggressions, frustrations and tensions – and the aim of the Apocalypse is to release its reader,⁶² then the construction of ideological and social conditions is in flux.⁶³

In contrast to the earlier common assumption that the Apocalypse was written under persecution, or to later understandings that see the narrative as reaction literature springing out of a situation where a dominant system oppresses or excludes a community, Leonard Thompson

⁵⁷ According to John Gager, it does not require a mystical turn of mind to see in Rome an invisible world – world of gods, spirits, and daimones, on the one side, of aspirations, tensions, and implicit power, on the other – a world where emperors, senators, and bishops were not in command. Gager, J. G., ed. *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 42–9 (46).

⁵⁸ Yarbro Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 84.

⁵⁹ Yarbro Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 14–8.

⁶⁰ Yarbro Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 137–8, 141, 147, 154.

⁶¹ Royalty, R. M. *The Streets of Heaven* 152; Duff, P. *Who Rides the Beast?* 10.

⁶² Yarbro Collins, A. *Crisis and Catharsis* 141–63.

⁶³ Modern day examples call attention to the complex relationship between the mind that produces and the mind that consumes artefacts. Both producers for the Hollywood film industry and the box-office-magnet-spectacle consumers of the Mad-Max sequels, Star War episodes, Bruce Willis ‘Saves the Planet’ narratives, and such ‘apocalyptic artefacts,’ would make interesting objects for a study on how expectations relate to experience.

has adopted as the framework an ordinary-life reading – life as peaceful, stable and free from crisis.⁶⁴ His findings are in line with Steven Friesen's work, which builds on Simon Price.⁶⁵ Based on the fact that there is no indication of excesses in imperial cult practices in Asia Minor during the reign of either Nero or Domitian, or at any other time during the second half of the first century, for that matter, Thompson suggests a no-crisis-hypothesis.⁶⁶ He finds that, even for Christians, life in Asia Minor was characterized by prosperity and serenity and that the frame for the Apocalypse depicting the followers of God as a persecuted minority is not a reflection of actual social realities.⁶⁷ Thompson suggests that, in Roman Asia of the later decades of the first century, the Christian community lived, by and large, peacefully alongside its neighbours. This seems feasible, since even if, at times, the Apocalypse conveys a sense of felt oppression it generally creates an impression of Christians participating in society in an ordinary way. The concern about the eating of sacrificial meat in Pergamum and Thyatira (2.14; 2.20), and the mindset of the wealthy Laodiceans (3.17) suggest everyday interests rather than oppression.

The Apocalypse presents various external and internal conflict situations, yet the internal narratees of the Apocalypse would seem to agree about one concern: Christians were not supposed to participate in the veneration of the imperial cult.⁶⁸ This could have led to some isolated incidents of society-related antagonism towards them. However, such incidents would have been a normal feature of the general culture. Marginal groups, without exception, were each in turn made carry the

⁶⁴ Richard, P. *Apocalypse. A People's Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995) 24.

⁶⁵ Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John*; Price, S. R. F. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁶⁶ Thompson, L. L. *The Book of Revelation. Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 146–67.

⁶⁷ According to Thompson, it was not persecution but complacency and compromise of the religious practitioners that caused tension. Thompson, L. L. *The Book of Revelation* 191–7.

⁶⁸ Friesen, S. J. "Satan's Throne, Imperial Cults and the Social Settings of Revelation." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27 (2005) 351–73; DeSilve, D. "The Social Setting of the Revelation of John: Conflicts within, Fears without." *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992) 273–302.

blame for problems in society.⁶⁹ The circus arena had an ever-greater social and cultural significance as the rulers had to be increasingly concerned with issues such as popular attitudes.⁷⁰ This does not make the Apocalypse a response to apparent harsh attitudes experienced in society, but rather a reflection of what that society was.

Against this background, the narrative appears to create another reality for its reader, outside of the actual reality experienced: that of a struggle between God and Satan.⁷¹ This would tie in with the ideas of Royalty and Duff about an ongoing clash of ideologies between the Christians themselves. The creation of a counter-reality where this clash is a question of life and death, as it were, serves to strengthen the awareness of how important the Christian ideology and community must have been for the body of believers.⁷² Jürgen Moltmann, in particular, interprets apocalyptic to be a symbol of ongoing revolutionary change, not only in historical and political realities but also in the cosmos as a whole.⁷³ The universe is not a total or a static entity: once taken up into the apocalyptic, it splits into eons, into a world that is passing away and a world that is coming to be.⁷⁴ His conception of the cosmos

⁶⁹ Kyle, D. *Spectacles of Death* 41.

⁷⁰ William Slater and the other contributors to his book discuss the role of theatre in Rome and in the parts of the Empire under the influence of Greek culture, from the point of view of social and cultural significance. As performances consisted not only of stage dramas but also of dinnertime entertainment and sporting events, the Roman theatre had great influence in giving voice to the demands of the man in the street. The performing arts provided a mental space for reflection through the interplay between plays, theatres, actors and the audience. Slater, W. J., ed. *Roman Theater and Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999) viii.

⁷¹ Thompson, L. L. *The Book of Revelation* 175, 180–1, 191–7.

⁷² Robert Royalty argues that the expression 'that which is' charges the narration with an ideological agenda in order to intensify the polarization between the perceived Christian commitment and a hypothetical diabolic opposition. Royalty's frame is a social embodiment as a context for the reading experience of even later narratees of the *Apocalypse*. Royalty, R. M. *The Streets of Heaven* 7, 14, 152–4. Paul Duff invites to develop on Royalty's thesis that the 'crisis' facing the communities described in the *Apocalypse* can be more accurately defined as reflecting a social conflict within the assemblies. Duff, P. "I Will Give to Each of You as Your Works Deserve: The Fiery-Eyed Son of God in Rev. 2.18–23." *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997) 116–33; Duff, P. *Who Rides the Beast?* 10–6.

⁷³ Moltmann, J. *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 1967) 16.

⁷⁴ Moltmann, J. *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981) 219–20; Moltmann, J. *Theology of Hope* 26.

is one of history in the making and in view of the eschaton,⁷⁵ orientated to the fulfilment of greater and greater promises. With this schema, he revives the medieval speculations of Joachim of Fiore.⁷⁶ For Moltmann, Joachim's main contribution is not his particular chronological delineation of the ages⁷⁷ but the notion of such delineation being possible.⁷⁸ Although aware of the effects that ideas of this nature could have when fuelled by dreams, hopes, and expectations concerning revolutionary changes in present conditions,⁷⁹ Joachim could not possibly foresee himself contributing to Chilastic thoughts⁸⁰ and power struggles,⁸¹ a dark parody not far removed from the antagonistic images depicted in the Apocalypse itself.

In order to provide a necessary background against which the narratee responds and creates each respective experience, Mikhail Bakhtin advocates perspectivism. This means the acknowledging of the necessity of difference and alterity that serve to limit meaning in dialogue. The changes of speaking subjects in a dialogue can be seen as the realization of the awareness of a significant 'otherness'.⁸² The words' capacity for new, contextual meaning is located in a concrete architectonic interrelationship of meanings built to create order out of the chaos of reality and to assign values to competing ideas and stimuli.⁸³ Perhaps the convention of literary competence may provoke a search for 'hid-

⁷⁵ Moltmann, J. *Theology of Hope* 124, 136.

⁷⁶ Conyers, A. J. "The Revival of Joachite Apocalyptic Speculation in Contemporary Theology." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 12 (1985) 197–211.

⁷⁷ West, D. C. and S. Zimdars-Swarz. *Joachim of Fiore* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983) 17.

⁷⁸ Moltmann, J. *The Trinity and the Kingdom* 219–22.

⁷⁹ In Germany, Lessing's thoughts about the education of mankind had a formative influence on the interpretation of the Enlightenment. Lessing quite deliberately picked up Joachim's ideas. Also Auguste Comte's teaching about the law of the three stages of the spirit reflects Joachim, and far-off echoes of his influence can be heard even in the declaration of Karl Marx that communism is the final transition from the realm of necessity to the realm of liberty. Moltmann, J. *The Trinity and the Kingdom* 206.

⁸⁰ de Smidt, J. C. "Chiliasm: An Escape from the Present into an Extra-Biblical Apocalyptic Imagination." *Scriptura* 45 (1993) 79–95.

⁸¹ de Villiers, P. G. R. "The Bible and the Struggle (for Power)." *Scriptura* 45 (1993) 1–28.

⁸² Bakhtin, M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, transl. V. W. McGee, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986) 92–3.

⁸³ Bakhtin, M. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, transl. V. Liapunov, ed. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) 63.

den meaning.⁸⁴ On the other hand, we seem to be cognitively built to analogize between text and world, between one story and another. Simply put, we cannot but interpret what we are confronted with, the experiences we encounter. It is entirely natural to discuss or imagine prismatic reflections on an event that the Apocalypse may have meant for an individual or a group to grapple with, and the way these – now refracted reflections – relate to us.⁸⁵

3.3 FROM PLAIN WORDS TO POWERFUL METAPHORS

In the discussion of the Apocalypse, little attention has been paid to the way words function.⁸⁶ Can a reader have confidence in naming, envisioning and predicating?⁸⁷ Likewise, more consideration is needed on the link between the form of the Apocalypse, as constructed by language, and the experience to which it contributes. In the human mind and memory, language performs specific functions of segmentation and integration of reality. In other words, language serves as a means of reflecting on certain phenomena, forms, levels of structure of reality, and their correlation on a broad spectrum, from the concrete (regional) to the abstract (universal) in an epistemological sense. It has the ability to reproduce both the visibly lived and the spiritual (ideal) reality.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Iser, W. *The Act of Reading* 5, 13.

⁸⁵ There is a tacit assumption that interpretation comes naturally, that human beings live by constantly interpreting. In this sense we might even rephrase Descartes: We interpret, therefore we are. While our basic human disposition makes interpretation appear to come naturally, the forms it takes, however, do not. Iser, W. *The Range of Interpretation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

⁸⁶ According to Boring, the symbols of the Apocalypse are not to be decoded into propositional language referring to objective realities, but are to be experienced as pointing to an ultimate reality language cannot describe. Boring, M. E. *Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989) 51–9. Metaphorical language has its foundation in a basic mental act of constructing an experience. Sandy, D. B. *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* 239–40.

⁸⁷ According to Tim Kenyon, the meaning of words depends on the meaning of sentence and, in a sense, language is prior to thought. Kenyon, T. “Non-Sentential Assertions and the Dependence Thesis of Word Meaning.” *Mind & Language* 14 (1999) 424–40.

⁸⁸ Coleman, E. J. *Creativity and Spirituality: Bonds between Art and Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998) 195–7; Kamio, M. “The Semantics of Perception: A Romantic Phrase of the Consciousness.” *Journal of the School of Letters* 4 (2008) 13–35.

Following traditional exegetical methods, most exegetes see the ambivalence of language as an obstacle. They aim at showing what the narrative is meant to say, or how it is to be understood from its originator's point of view (the author's perspective).⁸⁹ The purpose of the narrative is seen in the information or instructions the author intended to communicate. By contrast, from the perspective of more recent exegetical methods such as rhetorical and literary criticism and narrative exegesis ambivalence is seen as an intrinsic part of the discourse.⁹⁰ Rather than attempting to overcome the ambiguous and incongruous elements of the text,⁹¹ its ambivalence is regarded as part of the makeup, a product of the narrative experience.

The Apocalypse scholarship has come a long way since Friedrich Lücke, who found it difficult to reconcile what he considered an ec-centric form, on the one hand, and spiritual function, on the other. He retained the label Apocalypse for what he deemed prophetic revelation of the future fulfilment of the Messianic kingdom. The main content, he held, is the future and the fulfilment of God's kingdom on earth

⁸⁹ Hans Frei asserts that many historically orientated Western biblical scholars are conceptually ill equipped to cope with the text as primarily 'text' and not 'source.' Frei, H. W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) 130. For criticism levelled by Frei, see Hunsinger, G. "Hans Frei as Theologian." G. Hunsinger and W. C. Placher, eds. *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 242–3. Frei is criticized in Topping, R. R. *Revelation, Scripture and Church: Theological Hermeneutic Thought of James Barr, Paul Ricoeur and Hans Frei* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 130–56.

⁹⁰ According to Edmund Husserl, nobody shares another person's mental images, but only has his/her own. Furthermore, can we grasp someone else's thoughts as if they were separate from the images evoked by those very thoughts? Smith, W. D. and R. McIntyre. *Husserl and Intentionality: A Study of Mind, Meaning, and Language* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1982) 170–226. Ann Taves suggests two possible ways of explaining experience, the sui generis model and the ascriptive model. The sui generis model assumes specifically religious (or mystical or spiritual) experiences, emotions, acts, or objects; the ascriptive model denies their existence. She herself argues that the sui generis model holds little practical promise, whereas the ascriptive model provides means of linking cognitive and cultural approaches to explaining phenomena. Taves, A. "Ascription, Attribution, and Cognition in the Study of Experiences Deemed Religious." *Religion* 38 (2008) 125–40.

⁹¹ Patrick Colm Hogan guides the reader through all major theories of cognitive science, focusing on those areas that are most important to fostering a new understanding of the production and reception of literature, and of how the brain works and makes us feel while we read. Hogan, P. *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts* 140–65.

in conflict with an adversarial, anti-theocratic world. In this model, the form and imagery of the Apocalypse became a mere repository of timeless values and propositional truths. Lücke understood the form to be an elaborate and metaphorical way to convey the simple, fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.⁹²

Cognitive studies have put forth conceptual metaphors as categories that map the cognitive structure. Then again, construction of metaphors is an abstraction of personal experience of similarity. The use of metaphor relies on a cognitive background, the reader/narratees' awareness of its semantic substance.⁹³ This distinguishes metaphors in their use, rather than in their meaning, and the emphasis on use works for both literary and conceptual metaphors.⁹⁴ Both literary and conceptual metaphors are launched by the imaginative employment of words and sentences. They depend on the ordinary meanings of those words and, hence, on the ordinary meanings of the sentences they comprise.⁹⁵ In this sense, we could go as far as to saying that, in the real-life frame, they do not differ from any other utterance that serve an illustrative function.

To follow Donald Davidson's argumentation, metaphor belongs exclusively to the domain of use. When one is confronted with a new metaphorical occurrence for which no ready-made category or class is available, the occurrence remains undetected, unclassified and unasimilated until a class or some category of use is located or invented for him. The recognition of partial similarity on some dimension or construct provides a basis for analogy, and if linguistic translation is necessary, the partial similarity is expressed as a metaphor. The creation of metaphors and their usage in the narrative form seems to characterize

⁹² Lücke, F. *Versuch einer vollständigen Einleitung in die Offenbarung des Johannes: oder, Allgemeine Untersuchungen über die apokalyptische Litteratur überhaupt und die Apokalypse des Johannes insbesondere* (Bonn: E. Weber, 1832) 24.

⁹³ Jing, Z. "The Givenness of Background." E. Contini-Morava, R. S. Kirsner, and B. Rodriguez-Bachiller, eds. *Cognitive and Communicative Approaches to Linguistic Analysis* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004) 177–204.

⁹⁴ Reid, W. "Monosemy, Homonymy, and Polysemy." E. Contini-Morava, R. S. Kirsner, and B. Rodriguez-Bachiller, eds. *Cognitive and Communicative Approaches to Linguistic Analysis* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004) 93–130.

⁹⁵ Davidson, D. "What Metaphors Mean." S. Sacks, ed. *On Metaphor* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979) 31; Black, M. "More about Metaphor." A. Ortony, ed. *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 19–43; Reid, W. "Monosemy, Homonymy, and Polysemy" 93–130.

not only the theories about who we are⁹⁶ but also so-called scientific theories in general, describing how things are.⁹⁷ Some linguists argue that it is only with language that we come to think conceptually, that language learning, social interaction and personality formation are inseparable. In this sense, we as humans do not learn to talk but rather to 'mean'.⁹⁸ This may happen through the use of real-life frames. The role of the medium cannot be kept apart from the experience of the narrated world. A human being, as an interactive member of a highly organized society with a history and a culture, with a future and a past, is inconceivable without language. Figurative language is therefore not a matter of word play without analogue in cognition. Cognitive theorists point out that the various phenomena of conceptual projection, mental space connections,⁹⁹ which we see expressed in language, have analogies in other, non-linguistic areas of human behaviour.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, apocalypticity reflects narration that covers not only the Apoca-

⁹⁶ Hernadi, P. *Cultural Transactions: Nature, Self, Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) 134.

⁹⁷ Beecher-Monas, E. *Evaluating Scientific Evidence: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Intellectual Due Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2007) 36–56.

⁹⁸ Noam Chomsky argues that knowledge of language is internal to the human mind and linguistic studies must deal with this mental construct. Chomsky, N. "Naturalism and Dualism in the Study of Language." N. Chomsky. *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 75–105.

⁹⁹ Literary critic Mark Turner and cognitive scientist Gilles Fauconnier propose that language and literature are acts of the everyday human mind. Fauconnier, G. and M. Turner. *The Way We Think*; Turner, M. *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) vi. Blending theorists hypothesize that blending, or conceptual integration, describes some of the principles behind our everyday capacity to make connections across domains. This is visible in contexts such as humour, visual arts, grammatical constructions, figurative language, literary discourse, mathematics, scientific concepts and religious symbols. What this means for literary texts is that our imagination works effortlessly to grasp metaphors, metonyms, analogies, and allegories. Conceptual blending is understood as the ongoing instantaneous process of thinking, which recruits and combines significance from established cognitive structures and, by so doing, constructs new meanings. Hamilton, C. "Conceptual Integration in Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies*." E. Semino and J. Culpeper, eds. *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002) 1–22; Coulson, S. *Semantic Leaps: Frame-Shifting and Conceptual Blending in Meaning Construction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 212–21; DesCamp, M. T. *Metaphor and Ideology. Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum and Literary Methods through a Cognitive Lens* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 24–37.

¹⁰⁰ Fauconnier, G. *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) xviii.

lypse but also modern (contemporary) stories like Star War episodes, Mad Max sequels, Tolkien's Lord of the Rings or Hollywood spectacles picturing imminent destruction on a global scale (e.g. 'The Day After', 'Armageddon' and the 'I Am Legend')¹⁰¹ to the Biblical Apocalypse. Elizabeth Rosen indeed points out that writers have adopted one of the oldest sense-making paradigms, the apocalyptic myth, for a secular audience.¹⁰²

3.3.1 Communal Cognitions

Linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf who suggest that the nature of the language influences the habitual thought of its speakers advance the idea of narrative leading to recognitions about the mind and of linguistic study leading to insights about narrative.¹⁰³ Different language patterns yield different patterns of thought. This idea implies that the mechanism of the language conditions the thinking of its speaker community. Sapir goes on to propose that 'the real world' is largely built up on the language habits of each respective group. We see and hear and experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of perception.¹⁰⁴ Our

¹⁰¹ Filmmakers are drawn to Richard Matheson's topic of post-apocalyptic annihilation. These visualizations are set in a world after the end of civilization, and focus on the hard work and psychology of survivors. Each of the film versions of Matheson's novel *I Am Legend* is adapted to the milieu of the time of the production. *I Am Legend* is about coping with the unthinkable: what practical skills, what inner resources can a man bring to battling life-ending odds? In the version of *I Am Legend* directed by Francis Lawren in 2007, the protagonist addresses himself to the pertaining question posted on the door of his refrigerator, a picture of himself from a TIME magazine cover asking: 'Soldier? Savior? Scientist?' It is as if he himself is conflicted about his own experience. Yet the calamity offers an opportunity to return to 'normality.' The narrative reflects the ancient conception of the mixed properties of experientiality: the circularity of the past, future and the present – the normal is visited by the imagistic. See Murray, R. L. and J. K. Heumann. *Ecology and Popular Film: Cinema on the Edge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009) 181–94.

¹⁰² Rosen, E. K. *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008) 97–122.

¹⁰³ Hogan challenges the way psychologists think about the probative value of literature and the way literary critics think about the psychology of literature. More importantly, he contributes to a change of perspective concerning emotion and the nature and function of narrative. Hogan, P. C. *The Mind and Its Stories* 239–52.

¹⁰⁴ Sapir, L., A. I. Hallowell, and S. S. Newman, eds. *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir* (Menasha: Sapir Memorial Publication Fund,

consciousness does not start as a 'tabula rasa'. We are born into a community, we adopt its language, and through interchange, we construct the experience of reality as perceived by that community.¹⁰⁵ Anthony Thiselton has put forward the idea of 'corporate memory', which can be likened to preconsciousness or a priori knowledge.¹⁰⁶ An accepted pattern of using words goes together with communal manner of thinking, communal modes of narrating and collective behaviour patterns. It is not so much in the special uses of the language as in its constant ways of arranging data, like in narrative, and in its most ordinary everyday analysis of phenomena that we need to recognize the influence language has on other activities,¹⁰⁷ cultural, personal, and spiritual.¹⁰⁸ A community maintains its identity and vitality in changing historical circumstances through the maintenance of the collective memory that in religious tradition demands the writing and reading of narratives.¹⁰⁹

Given the premise sustained by Barthes that narrative is not a line of words releasing a single ideological meaning but a multidimensional space in which a variety of traditions blend and clash,¹¹⁰ language does play a vital role as we listen to the Apocalypse. Neither historical reconstructions of early Christianity nor attempts to chart the social world of the ancient Mediterranean provide this essential literary experience. There is a considerable difference between the understanding of apoc-

1941) 75–93, cited in Whorf, L. B. *Language, Thought, and Reality* 134. See also Allan, K. *Natural Language Semantics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 311.

¹⁰⁵ Fauconnier, G. and M. Turner. *The Way We Think* 189–91.

¹⁰⁶ The corporate memory of the community has the function of a frame that classifies people, places, things and events, and determines or at least conditions the terms on which meaning creation takes place. Thiselton, A. C. *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* 708. Collective memory is preserved by the acts of religious personage that strike the imagination, as well as by the exhortations incessantly heard in human interrelations and the media. Halbwachs, M. "Religious Collective Memory." M. Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*, transl. and ed. L. A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 84–119.

¹⁰⁷ Hawkes, T. *Structuralism and Semiotics* 17–9.

¹⁰⁸ Giordan, G. "Spirituality: From a Religious Concept to a Sociological Theory." K. Flanagan and P. C. Jupp. *A Sociology of Spirituality* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 170–4.

¹⁰⁹ For biblical studies, the epistemological status of the text as a system or systems of signs necessitates narratological, structural and rhetorical approaches. Thiselton, A. C. "Biblical Studies and Theoretical Hermeneutics." J. Barton, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 97.

¹¹⁰ Barthes, R. "The Death of the Author." R. Barthes. *Image – Musik – Text*, transl. S. Heath (New York: Hill & Wang, 1986) 142–8.

apocalypticity in John Collins' summation of the genre as a 'distinctive combination of elements, all of which can be found elsewhere',¹¹¹ and Clifford Geertz's summation of apocalyptic abstractions as grounded in culture, where they can be experienced.¹¹² The difference between Collins' observations on the elements defining apocalyptic and Geertz's contention that in a religious – hence cultural – context apocalyptic writings belong to a symbolic system may be described as a polarity of a sort. Putting it differently, we seem to have two models describing existence, the 'model of' and 'the model for' existence. The former presents the state of affairs in the past and is considered less pertinent, the latter is set in the present and is deemed more appropriate.

As for the content of the Apocalypse, the tension between an intolerable 'is' and an eagerly anticipated 'ought' is part of the storyline. Along these lines the Apocalypse denounces the existing world where wealth, power, royal office and other advantages belong to the 'other' and this calls for a cataclysmic change of world order. This includes a turnabout of the existing model through the humbling of the mighty (21.24) and the exaltation of the meek (2.26). Moreover, even though the Lamb and the Beast are opposites, adherence to both is described with similar pictures of servitude. Origins, functions and layout of the two temple cities, ancient Babylon and new Jerusalem, are depicted in similar ways. Thus, the reversals reorient those who feel anxiety, frustration and impotence towards an admiration for a new – though rationally unintelligible – sense of confidence through the intense imagistic and radical otherness.¹¹³

Language use, psychological functions, questions of worldview, social tensions and religious beliefs are specific features that convey ideological parameters. They do not, however, amount to the quality of apocalypticity as perceived by the reader, nor do compositional elements in the Apocalypse such as narrative eccentricities, a particular combination of distinctive themes and the form of a visionary appro-

¹¹¹ Collins, J. J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* 8–9.

¹¹² Geertz, C. "Religion as a Cultural System." M. Lambek, ed. *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002) 61–82.

¹¹³ Lincoln, B. "Apocalyptic Temporality and Politics." J. J. Collins, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, Vol 1: *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (London: Continuum, 2000) 467.

priation.¹¹⁴ 'Apocalypticity' results from the feeling of apprehension while one is, through imagistic elements in the Apocalypse, drawn into the possible 'otherness' of the narrative.¹¹⁵ It denotes qualitative features of consciousness that favour the imagistic over the argumentative. It works towards an understanding of the Apocalypse effected through collective experiential and aesthetic elements that create, by means of reader narrativization and reflection, abstraction and heightened intensity of experience. A description of the engagement with the Apocalypse calls for a term that includes these aspects and transforms the adjective or noun 'apocalyptic', which is content-focused, to an experience-focused word. Similarly, an addition is needed to the concrete usage of the noun 'apocalypticism', as a type of eschatology and collective behaviour. Apocalypticity embraces the perspective that the reading and performing of the artefact are acts that include the audience, the readers, as narratees. Thus, the Apocalypse and its narratees produce a consciousness through visualization, reflection, contrasting and merging of pictures. This consciousness enables to bridge the secular and the sacred while visually diversity is retained.¹¹⁶ The proposed term 'apocalypticity' denotes that spirituality emerging from the Apocalypse can be wrapped up in different ways. Apocalypticity is what the reader, by using real-life frames, infers from the imagistic grounding of the narrative as possible 'experientible' entities of the senses.¹¹⁷ It bases the resulting shared understanding on inferring otherness from

¹¹⁴ See Aune's discussion referring to the terms apocalyptic and apocalypticism in Aune, D. E. *Apocalypticism, Prophecy and Magic* 1–5.

¹¹⁵ Kari Syreeni argues for the function of the 'symbolic world' in the narrative. Accordingly, narratives provide alternative worlds where people can operate in their imagination, and which serve as ideals. Moreover, these virtual worlds function as empowerment. Syreeni, K. "Wonderlands. A Beginner's Guide to the Three Worlds." *Svensk Eksegetisk Årsbok* 64 (1999) 46.

¹¹⁶ Peter Södergård presents a similar argument within semiotic and cognitive studies, although from the perspective of the textual structural level. According to Södergård, the reading of discourse sets in motion textual structures triggering volitive and emotive elements in the reader, which unite his or her limited mind with God's unlimited mind. In this immersion, the reader perceives the divine, the world and self in *the One and All*. Södergård, J. P. *The Hermetic Piety of the Mind. A Semiotic and Cognitive Study of the Discourse of Hermes Trismegistos* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003) 241–2.

¹¹⁷ Experientible is put in perspective with 'potentiality', which is not an experientible characteristic. Experience enables the visualisation of the potential. Guthrie, W. K. C. *Aristotle: An Encounter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 128–9.

the imagistic, from that which can only be imagined.¹¹⁸ What can only be imagined cannot be based on argument; rather, it evokes a degree of a sublime, holistic spirituality. Apocalypticity illustrates how the Apocalypse, by actualizing through its narrative that which can only be imagined, allows a connectedness to varying dimensions of spirituality. It may be interesting in further research to examine whether this quality of apocalypticity is the case for the experience of apocalyptic literature in general.

3.3.2 *Collective Experience*

Constructivist theories of cognition describe the reader as co-evolving with the emerging experience.¹¹⁹ A reader engaged with a text such as the Apocalypse does not merely tacitly experience the characters and embrace moral lessons from their actions.¹²⁰ The reader's connection with the text also extends to the many ways in which he or she himself or herself is, and becomes, involved in collective activities, apart from the narrated world that he or she has experienced.¹²¹ More generally, the narrative does not merely reflect a possible world that the reader

¹¹⁸ Both collective memory and tacit knowledge aid to infer a meaning that corresponds to the visualization of 'Armageddon.' In a discussion, arranged on December 20, 2008, and aired by a Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE), the former Finnish Prime Minister used 'Armageddon' to illustrate the present financial crisis as dwarfing the experience of the calamities experienced during the Second World War. This rests on the assumption that 'Armageddon' explains the gravity of the crisis. Everybody grasps the seriousness of the situation and is unified in the desire to show resilience, although nobody has either experience or knowledge of 'Armageddon,' which is an imagistic perception of utter otherness.

¹¹⁹ Lewis, C. "Limits of Identification: The Personal, Pleasurable, and Critical in Reader Response." *Journal of Literacy Research* 32 (2000) 253–66.

¹²⁰ The reader constructs knowledge during the reading experience, as it is possible to go backwards, forwards and sideways in order to assimilate, internalize and reshape or transform information into thoughts that make sense in his or her world. Spivey, N. N. *The Constructivist Metaphor: Reading, Writing, and the Making of Meaning*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1997; Richardson, J. S., R. F. Morgan, and C. E. Fleener. *Reading to Learn in the Content Areas* (Belmont: Cengage Learning, 2008) 104–13.

¹²¹ As Beach has shown, communities, such as book clubs or classrooms, both shape and are shaped by literary relationships. Beach, R. "Critical Issues: Reading and Responding to Literature at the Level of Activity." *Journal of Literacy Research* 32 (2000) 237–51. See also Davis, B., D. Sumara, and R. Luce-Kapler. *Engaging Minds: Learning and Teaching in a Complex World* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000); Varela, F. J., V. E. Thompson, and E. Rosch. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993).

may or may not embrace, but it can facilitate its construction, thus virtualizing the virtual world – with or without the narratees in a joint or collective experience.¹²²

The observation that texts and readers go together with the shaping social contexts may give ample reason to modify the notion about the generic processes of the Apocalypse and its function. To what extent, then, should we consider this text the product of a specific social context, in the tradition of Paul Hanson ascribing the apocalyptic genre to expressions of a marginalized group? We should note that the specificity of the social context is arbitrary. Would it be more precise to view the text as an artefact linking the interests of its readers and thus resulting in the formation of a group? What is of interest is that, essentially, all texts, readers, artefacts and activities possess the trait of producing clusters of shared activity and generate interpretative communities by embodying individual and collective experiences.

Exegetes assume the concept of a shared apocalyptic mindset as part of the thought world of early Christianity.¹²³ It is not a novelty to view thought and expression in a related if not identical way. Theories of an inner language attest to this: from the Platonic *διαβολή* to Augustine's *verbum mentis* to William of Occam's *lingua mentalis* to Husserl's *endophasia* to Fodor's *mentalese*.¹²⁴ It is difficult to verify whether Ferdinand de Saussure is right in maintaining that there is no thinking without language because language itself is the organizer we use in learning to think, or whether there is a genetic code that enables thoughts to produce a language that is used for developing conceptual thinking. Either way, we have to assume that both the text and the reader must already apply this existing system of language as part of the process of creating meaning. Donald Davidson rejects the idea that, in particular communicative situations, words have meaning independently of particular speakers.¹²⁵ However, the entire interpretative com-

¹²² Lancer, *S. Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) 5.

¹²³ Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "The Phenomenon of Early Christian Apocalyptic" 295.

¹²⁴ In the last couple of decades, the idea that thought looks very much like a language has gained pride of place as a central topic in the philosophy of the mind. Recanati, F. *Direct Reference: From Language to Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) 137.

¹²⁵ Davidson's argument in his essay "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", first published in 1974, is based on our common way of perceiving the world. Individually and communally, we may go plenty wrong, but only on condition that, in most respects, we are right. It follows that when we study what language requires in the way

munity must, ultimately, share a language. As Ferdinand de Saussure puts it, language is the social side of speech; outside the individual, who is unable to create or modify it by himself, it exists only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of the community.¹²⁶ The special feature of this contract is that no one gets a chance to evaluate it before signing. We absorb language before we can think that language is the very condition for thinking. Through a process of reflection, we as individuals are able to reject some particular knowledge that a group explicitly teaches, and possibly overthrow some particular beliefs that a culture forcibly imposes – but we have already accepted the words and meanings through which those beliefs are expressed.

The overlapping relationships between the reader, the Apocalypse and the reading community are made more multifaceted by the human capacity to remember, to live out convictions,¹²⁷ and to reinterpret. These are features present in the experiencing of the artefact. Contexts can be defined in several ways: the cultural values, which inform the producers of texts, the relationship between the text and the reader or community of readers, and the production of the texts themselves as social artefacts, or the interest groups informed by their cultural values in relationship with the text.¹²⁸ Crucial for the ongoing reading of the Apocalypse within each respective interest group is the issue of how that very proceeding creates a form of special consciousness, similar to a meditative practice, where readers/researchers continue to gather

of an overall ontology, we are not just making a tour of our own picture of things: what we take there to be is pretty much what there is. Davidson, D. "Language and Reality." D. Davidson. *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 183–98. For discussion on "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", see Naugle, D. K. *Worldview. The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eedermans, 2002) 164–71, and LePore, E. and K. Ludwig. *Donald Davidson: Meaning, Truth, Language, and Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 263–97.

¹²⁶ de Saussure, F. *Course in General Linguistic*, transl. R. Harris, ed. C. Bally and A. Sechehaye with the collaboration of A. Riedlinger (London: Duckworth, 1983) 14.

¹²⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, while addressing the actuality of human situatedness, recognized that everybody participates in a situation belonging to a communal tradition. Thus, we live out the values the members of our social group subscribe to. Nietzsche, F. W. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, transl. J. Norman, ed. R.-P. Horstmann and J. Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) xviii.

¹²⁸ Dyck, J.E. "A Map of Ideology for Biblical Critics." M. D. Carroll R., ed. *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation* (London: Continuum, 2000) 124–8.

new understanding about the artefact to contribute to the community organized around it and their literary engagements. With each return to the Apocalypse, the narratee is compelled to interpret the temporal period that exists between the new encounter and the last one, thereby creating a continual regenerative process of the common understanding. What seems essential, during and following the involvement with the Apocalypse, is the individual reflection upon past and present experiences as well as future expectations.¹²⁹ As definitive meaning is undetermined, so is the notion of definitive evaluation, since value is even more contextually determined than meaning.

A functional concept of reading grew with awareness of the close link reading has to social order. Reading appears as a means of thinking and of inviting attention to other activities in various life situations.¹³⁰ According to Peter Berger, a sociologist, the religious sphere in human experience is a construction, a social space of meaning projecting a sacred universe.¹³¹ Since the mystical is experienced as a realm set against the reality of everyday life and is often seen to surround it, it can only be communicated by sacredness through the collective symbolizations of religion.¹³² Thus, religious texts are a universe of constructed meaning, built to reflect the collective, and therefore to project itself right into the personal beliefs of the individual and of social groups. Most comprehension would seem to be consciously effortless, and under-

¹²⁹ Rosenblatt, L. M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* 121.

¹³⁰ In the discussion on the answers to the theory-to-practice question, reading educators point out that it is the attitude of mind that provides a shape for the reading. Rich, S. "Restoring Power to Teachers: The Impact of 'Whole Language.'" *Language Arts* 62 (1985) 717–24; Singer, H. and R. Ruddell, eds. *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (Newark: International Reading Association, 1990) 841–56.

¹³¹ Berger, P. and T. Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966); Berger, P. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969); Woodhead, L., P. Heelas, and D. Martin, eds. *Peter Berger and the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2001).

¹³² According to Habermas, the core of collective consciousness is established and regenerated in the symbolic. Symbols orient the individual and form an intersubjective unity. This collective identity defines the circle of those who perceive themselves as belonging to those addressed in the first-person plural. Habermas, J. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol 2: *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, transl. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987) 60; Mendieta, E. "Modernity's Religion: Habermas and the Linguistification of the Sacred." L. E. Hahn, ed. *Perspectives on Habermas* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000) 123–38.

standing appears to emerge because of presumed nonconscious processes, and as such to be received rather than to be constructed. However, constructions do not just appear, something constructed strongly implies a deliberate purpose. Thus, an agent of some sort is incorporated into a constructivist model of cognition.¹³³ In social constructivism, attention is paid to the social frameworks that promote the fashioning of such internal structures in accordance with the requirements of an individual's social environment.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the subjective impact of this construction and reflection is in the explanation of events of significance, thus explaining the perceived good and bad in life within that order.¹³⁵

3.4 SEARCH FOR A SETTING

In the Apocalypse, liturgical themes rise to prominence in the course of repeated use of ceremonial descriptions and this has led to the appropriation of the Apocalypse in Christian worship. Thus, research on the depiction of a religious experience as revealed in apocalyptic narratives has supplemented the more prominent reflection on ideology. Sigmund Mowinckel introduces an important track into the reading frame of the Apocalypse as he locates the origin of apocalyptic motifs within the cult-life of the Jerusalem temple.¹³⁶ This aspect is partly informed by

¹³³ Hruby, G. "Sociological, Postmodern, and New Realism Perspectives in Social Constructionism. Implications for Literary Research." *Reading Research Quarterly* 36 (2001) 48–62.

¹³⁴ As early as in the early eighteenth century, in his *verum-factum* principle, which can be phrased: *the truth is the same as the made*, or *we know it because we made it*, Italian rhetorician Vichian Ingenium stated that truth and knowledge are just human constructs. Luft, S. R. *Vico's Uncanny Humanism. Reading the "New Science" between Modern and Postmodern* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003) 8–12.

¹³⁵ Derrida employs *logocentrism* to refer to a misguided sense of the mastery of concept over language. Degenaar, J. "Deconstruction – The Celebration of Language." B. Lategan, ed. *The Reader and Beyond: Theory and Practice in South African Reception Studies* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1992) 196. In his assessment of reading practices of biblical texts, Carroll similarly concludes that common theologizing operates mostly from the premise that meaning can be extracted from the text itself, or from an examination of the contextual and historical circumstances leading to the production of that text. Carroll, R. P. *Wolf in the Sheepfold* 37; Carroll, R. P. "Removing an Ancient Landmark: Reading the Bible as Cultural Production." M. O'Kane, ed. *Borders, Boundaries and the Bible* (London: Continuum, 2002) 6–14.

¹³⁶ He also points out that throughout the ancient Near East the conception of the

the lively tradition of ecstatic experience in ancient Judaism and early Christianity.¹³⁷ Some scholars have attempted to link the Apocalypse with the paschal liturgy of early Christianity.¹³⁸ The theory has also been advanced that the Apocalypse is even a script for a ritual setting¹³⁹ — as John Gager points out: myth, symbol, and liturgy all function as means of resistance,¹⁴⁰ creating boundary marks of otherness.¹⁴¹ Indeed, one cognate area that deserves more attention is texts related to the Apocalypse such as the Mithras Liturgy with which Jewish ascent texts have many affinities.¹⁴² The vocabulary, motifs and ideas of the Apocalypse

king and the royal ideology were mythical. Mowinckel, S. *He that Cometh*, transl. G. W. Anderson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956) 81.

¹³⁷ It has been recognized that this unique literary expression begins with the Hebrew prophets. Cook, S. L. *Prophecy and Apocalypticism* 55–84. It is also present in extrabiblical texts, and is located in the first-century literary environment. McNamara, M. *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*; McNamara, M. *Palestinian Judaism and the New Testament* (Dublin: Veritas, 1983); Nissinen, M. *Prophecy and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); Aune, D. E. *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987) 226–52; Fekkes, J. *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*; Moyise, S. *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*. For Qumran, see Braun, H. *Qumran und das Neue Testament*, vol. 1. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966); García Martínez, F. *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Chyutin, M. *The New Jerusalem Scroll from Qumran: A Comprehensive Reconstruction* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Aune, D. E. “Qumran and the Book of Revelation.” P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, vol. 2. (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 622–50.

¹³⁸ Shepherd M. H. *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960); Strand, K. “Another Look at the ‘Lord’s Day’ in the Early Church and in Rev 1.10.” *New Testament Studies* 13 (1967) 174–81. See especially p. 177.

¹³⁹ Ruiz, J.-P. “Betwixt and Between on the Lord’s Day” 221–41.

¹⁴⁰ Gager, J. G. *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1975) 49–57.

¹⁴¹ Hoffman, L. “Censoring in and Censoring out” 22–3; Hoffman, L. *Beyond the Text* 149–71. According to Smith, the Hellenistic period saw the development of a Judaism, which was profoundly shaped by Greco-Oriental thought, and in which mystical and magical elements were very important. That such elements were present in such diverse settings as the magical papyri, Gnosticism, Christianity, and Hellenistic and Rabbinic Judaism shows that they derived from a common background. Smith, M. “Observations on Hekhalot Rabbati” 154. See also Elior, R. “Mysticism, Magic, and Angelology” 3–53.

¹⁴² There is also a distinction between the two. The numerous instructions in ‘Mithras Liturgy’ result in the more tentative mood of the text compared to the ‘Heikhalot’ texts, in which teaching and ascending can be simultaneous. Janowitz, N. *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University

have common traits with the line of development from pre-rabbinic visionary literature, other early apocalypses, and some of the literature from Qumran, to the Merkabah mysticism¹⁴³ of rabbinic literature and the Heikhalot texts. However, the parallels need not indicate a direct relationship between the Apocalypse and Jewish mysticism.

Several of the Jewish and early Christian apocalypses describe ascents through heaven and contain Merkabah motifs. However, as the following sub-section will show, the spirit rapture is not the only common theme to appear in a wide range of Jewish and Christian literature. After all, more than a text-internal hint such as the motif of the spirit rapture is required to place the Apocalypse squarely in a certain tradition. Then again, the accounted spirit raptures support the notion of a common tradition of spiritual experience in a mystic setting. As comparative studies of the Apocalypse have shown, the visionary experience and the inclusion of hymns, oratorios and liturgies underscore the mystic aspect of experiencing the Apocalypse.¹⁴⁴

The Qumran discoveries exemplify the complex relationship between literary texts and their social context. A reconstruction of the social setting of the community that produced and/or preserved these texts indicates a favourable stance toward apocalypticism, though not

Press, 2002) 63–84.

¹⁴³ Studies on a possible relationship between early Christianity and Jewish Merkabah mysticism, which Jarl Fossum calls ‘The New Religionsgeschichtliche Schule’ maintain that it is possible to identify a Jewish Merkabah mystical background to explain the growth of the divinization of Jesus. Fossum, J. E. “The New Religionsgeschichtliche Schule: The Quest for Jewish Christology.” E. H. Lovering, ed. *Scholars of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1991) 638–46; Hurtado, L. W. *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 11–3; Fossum, J. E. *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); Eskola, T. *Messiah and the Throne. Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). For the origins of the discussion, see Schäfer, P. and J. Dan, eds. *Gershom Scholem’s Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years after: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993).

¹⁴⁴ There are long established traditions that perceive the Apocalypse as a liturgy of a community. Filho, J. “The Apocalypse of John as an Account of a Visionary Experience” 213–34; Visser, D. *Apocalypse as Utopian Expectation [800–1500]* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). Visser relates the utopian expectation of medieval Apocalypse commentaries to exegesis and liturgy as well as to art; Barr, D. “Blessed Are Those Who Hear” 87–103; Ruiz, J.-P. “Betwixt and Between on the Lord’s Day” 221–41.

necessarily the apocalyptic as usually understood.¹⁴⁵ This is most likely to mean that Qumran was not a breeding ground of presumed apocalyptic thought and ideology, but a place of preservation for these writings.¹⁴⁶ In addition to the Qumran texts, the Nag Hammadi findings¹⁴⁷ have both brought to light new sources for the research of the apocalyptic and enriched the material of the early Christian apocalypses. They have also raised the old questions of the relationship between the apocalyptic and Gnostic ideology.¹⁴⁸ One of the central issues connecting the apocalyptic and the Gnostic worldview is the role of esoteric knowledge imparted to the individual.¹⁴⁹

3.4.1 *Exegetical Assumptions and Spiritual Experience*

By the second century BCE, there developed within Judaism a growing interest in the secrets of heaven, particularly in the idea of seeing God upon his throne. This interest differed from endeavours to uncover secrets of the future such as the time of the kingdom and judgment. This visualizing of God upon his throne is the basic element of early Jewish and Christian mysticism. It can be traced as far back as to the exilic era and Ezek 1.26–28, where Ezekiel describes his vision of an enthroned

¹⁴⁵ The character of the community as formed around Zadok, the teacher of righteousness, is amply portrayed in Wachholder, B. Z. *The Dawn of Qumran: The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1983).

¹⁴⁶ Hartman, S. S. "Die Bedeutung der Qumranfunde für die Erforschung der Apokalyptik." D. Hellholm, ed. *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 495–530.

¹⁴⁷ McConkey Robinson, J. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, transl. members of the Gnostic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity (Claremont, Calif. Leiden: Brill, 1996).

¹⁴⁸ Krause, M. "Die Litterarischen Gattungen der Apokalypsen von Nag Hammadi." D. Hellholm, ed. *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism. Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 621–37. See especially his bibliography on further studies.

¹⁴⁹ MacRae, G. "Apocalyptic Eschatology in Gnosticism." D. Hellholm, ed. *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism. Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 317–25; Kurt, R. "Apokalyptik in der Diskussion." D. Hellholm, ed. *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism. Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) 789.

man-like figure, which is identified as ‘the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord’.¹⁵⁰

According to Ezekiel, this Glory is the human form of God. The book of Daniel builds upon Ezekiel’s vision and demonstrates an emerging Jewish interest in the secret of God’s enthronement and court in heaven. The description of God in Dan 7.9 as an enthroned being known as the Ancient of Days illustrates how anthropomorphic detail has been given to the Glory (e.g. hair like pure wool, which is repeated in the Apocalypse 1.14). Daniel demonstrates that early Jewish mysticism hypostasized the Glory of the Lord, believing that it should be represented in a human form.¹⁵¹

First Enoch contains elements that became typical in Merkabah mysticism: ascent to heaven, the idea of a house within a house, the terror felt by the visionary, and the vision of God upon his throne in his court. The biblical Apocalypse shares these characteristics; even the idea of a house within a house can be detected in the presentation of Jesus, on the one hand, knocking on the door of the Laodiceans (3.20) and John, on the other hand, entering heaven through a door (4.1; penetrating further 11.19 into the opened temple and the witness 15.5 and finally all heaven open for everyone 19.11 and the heavenly city). The Apocalypse appears to be Christianizing Merkabah mysticism by placing Jesus on God’s throne!¹⁵² The post-Pauline Letter to the Ephesians likewise modifies Merkabah mysticism by identifying Jesus as the Glory of the Lord (Eph 1.17, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ πατὴρ τῆς δόξης). According to an ancient tradition, Rabbi Akiba was rebuked for suggesting that the Davidic Messiah is to be enthroned next to God. Mark’s description of how the high priest condemned Jesus for speaking about his enthronement beside God (Mark 14.62,63) is best understood against this background of an intra-Jewish controversy rooted in

¹⁵⁰ In the Second Temple period, the rivalry between the Mosaic and Enochic traditions produced literature depicting each respected figure as exalted to the heavenly throne. The ascenders, Merkabah visions, and divinizing all find counterparts in the Apocalypse. Ruffato, K. J. “Polemics with Enochic Traditions in the *Exagoge* of Exekiel the Tragedian.” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 15 (2006) 195–210.

¹⁵¹ O’Neill, J. C. “Who Is Comparable To Me In My Glory?” 4Q491 fragment 11 (4Q491C) and The New Testament.” *Novum Testamentum* 42 (2000) 24–38.

¹⁵² This is a logical contextualizing against the background of either a heavenly enthronement of Enoch or Moses. Orlov, A. A. “Ex 33 on God’s Face: A Lesson From The Enochic Tradition.” *Scrinium* 3 (2007) 323–36; Ruffato, K. J. “Polemics with Enochic Traditions” 195–210.

early Jewish mystical interests.¹⁵³

Vita Daphna Arbel observes that five features are typical of the outlooks of the mystical traditions based on exegetical assumptions and religious experience. First, producers and the consumers of the Heikhalot and Merkabah mysticism, are associated with traditional Jewish teachings, culture, ethics and conventional forms of study. The visionaries are esteemed, and various examples attest to qualification in Jewish law, ethics and exegesis of the Torah. Second, despite being educated and closely affiliated with priestly traditions, literature and temple rituals the mystics probably stood outside official rabbinic groups. The traditional Judaic notion defines the relationship between God and the individual around the divinely initiated revelation at Sinai and its continuous manifestation in the Torah. However, in Heikhalot and Merkabah a personally initiated alternative mysticism, an mystical experience with God and the heavenly realm is emphasized. Third, deciphering divine revelations and wishing to comprehend them speaks for the desire to decode the mysteries of life. Fourth, great value is attributed to written documents, which contain the teachings of the mystics. Scribal activity as well as attestation by heavenly creatures merits the act of recording. Fifth, the literary products of Heikhalot and Merkabah mysticism demonstrate the capacity to express mystical notions through the reapplication and appropriation of biblical and cultural themes from antiquity.¹⁵⁴

The 'descenders to the chariots,' as the mystical group was called, are

¹⁵³ Hayman, P. "Monotheism – A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 42 (1991) 1–15; Segal, A. F. "The Risen Christ and the Angelic Mediator Figures in Light of Qumran." J. H. Charlesworth, ed. *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 302–28. For discussion on the Heikhalot and Merkabah narratives, see Arbel, D. "Seal of Resemblance, Full of Wisdom, and Perfect in Beauty: The Enoch/Metatron Narrative of 3 Enoch and Ezekiel 28." *Harvard Theological Review* 4 (2005) 121–42. The article includes the account of Enoch/Metatron, found in an elaborated form in 3Enoch, in which threads from a variety of sources are drawn together, e.g. 'angel of the Lord' traditions (e.g. Exod 23:20,21, b. Sanh. 38b, Apocalypse of Abraham), traditions of divinized angelomorphic humans and exalted figures, found in Daniel 7 and pseudepigraphic sources (e.g. T. Levi, Ascen. Isa. 6–11, and Apoc. Ab. 15–19) and in several Qumran texts (e.g. 4QShirShabb, 11QMelch), as well as Talmudic and midrashic polemics against beliefs in a second deity or an angelic vice-regent (e.g. b. Hag. 14a; b. Sanh. 38b).

¹⁵⁴ Arbel, V. D. *Beholders of Divine Secrets: Mysticism and Myth in Hekhalot and Merkavah Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) 144–8.

depicted as belonging to a circle of learning.¹⁵⁵ In the Apocalypse, the described experience of the presence of God in the person of Christ points to these roots in Jewish mysticism, which recounts the visionary experiences of divine mysteries about what is above and below, as well as about what has happened and will happen. In the Exagoge of Ezekiel the Tragedian,¹⁵⁶ Moses is the chosen one who receives esoteric knowledge. He is shown heaven and earth. The phrase what is, what has been, and what shall be (Exagoge 1.89) finds a counterpart in the opening of the Apocalypse (1.19): John receives knowledge revealing what is, what has been, and what shall be, though in the Apocalypse it characterizes both the revealer and the things revealed.

Most likely some of the earliest Christians were devout Jews and therefore sought to find out what was the relationship between Jesus and God. The New Testament holds significant evidence that these earliest Christians understood Jesus to be the Glory of God, namely God's visible image or form as depicted in the Hebrew Scriptures,¹⁵⁷ and what was perhaps expounded by mysticism, revealed in human flesh (John 1.14; 2Cor 4.6). For Larry Hurtado, the worship of Jesus by the early Christians was a significant 'mutation' or innovation in Jewish monotheistic tradition, a result of drawing upon intermediary beings, divine agents, exalted patriarchs and principle angels from ancient Judaism.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, Ioan Couliano and Gedaliahu Stroumsa propose the existence of a high divinity and an archangel fulfilling the role of God, based on testimonies to the concept of a great angel in sectarian Judaism that allows a hierarchical 'ditheism'.¹⁵⁹ This finds affinity

¹⁵⁵ Davila, J. *Descenders to the Chariot. The People behind the Hekhalot Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 139.

¹⁵⁶ Ruffato, K. J. "Polemics with Enochic Traditions" 195–210.

¹⁵⁷ For the tradition of the divine glory, see Fossum, J. E. *The Image of the Invisible God* 13–4.

¹⁵⁸ Hurtado, L. W. *One God, One Lord* 299. By 'mutation' Hurtado means a direct outgrowth from Jewish tradition. His divine agent's theory has been criticized in Eskola, T. *Messiah and the Throne* 323–5. Hurtado responds in Hurtado L. W. *One God, One Lord* x–xiii. See also Hurtado, L. W. *Lord Jesus Christ* 27–78, and Hurtado, L. W. *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?* 111–33.

¹⁵⁹ Couliano, I. P. *The Tree of Gnosis: Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism*, transl. H. S. Wiesner and I. P. Couliano (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1992) 5; Stroumsa, G. A. G. *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 172. See also Idel, M. *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005) 83–5.

with some early visionary experiences of Jesus as the Glory of God (the transfiguration, Paul's conversion experience and the visions of Christ in the Apocalypse).¹⁶⁰

This identification of Christ with God's visible image is the starting point of the worship of Jesus, a possible theme in the Apocalypse, and of the confession that he is Lord. One interest within the realm of Christian mysticism is the role that the typically Christian mysteries of Baptism and the Eucharist could have played in the experience of Christ's presence for the believer in the first century. The Apocalypse may indicate early Christian baptismal praxis wherein the initiate received a mark that was the bestowal of the Divine Name as a seal. This reception of the Divine Name, together with washing and being clothed in white (7.14; 3.18), can be understood as a post-baptismal preparation for the reception of the Eucharist, the experience of the presence of God through the sacrament (19.9). Chapters 4–5 and the other scenes of worship that follow in the Apocalypse are visual depictions of the heavenly worship hidden to the naked eye, in which the believer participates. They serve as a vivid commentary on the experience of the adherent in worship, where the Lamb who shed his blood and gave his body is present, sharing his victory through this enactment. Narratees who listened to the Apocalypse from start to finish were reminded that heaven and the presence of Christ were not a distant reality up there nor were they a future far down the road expectation but an accessible and present reality of spirituality.

However, there are considerable difficulties in defining mysticism. Mysticism involves a form of religious experience or awareness.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Alexander, P. S. *Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (London: Continuum, 2006) 138–44.

¹⁶¹ Later records of Christian mystics include several parables with scenes resembling those in the Apocalypse. Through these parables, mystics like Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint John of the Cross, Lactantius and Joachim of Fiore, expressed their inner experience. Jones, C., G. Wainwright, and E. Yarnold, eds. *The Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 2004); Woods, R. J. *Christian Spirituality. God's Presence through the Ages* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006). There exist also accounts of interest outside Christianity. Yogananda, P. *Autobiography of a Yogi* (Nevada City: Crystal Clarity, 2005). C. G. Jung sees in the Apocalypse indications of repression and the dilemma of evil, conflicts common to the inner life of all Christians. Jung, C. G. *Answer to Job* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984) 82–178. See also Bishop, P. *Jung's Answer to Job. A Commentary* (Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2002) 137–153; Fontana, D. *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) 95–9. The prominent

The study of esoteric matters is not in and of itself mysticism as in Merkabah mysticism or the Heikhalot texts. For example, there is significant scholarly debate as to whether the rabbinic material relevant to Merkabah should be seen in conjunction with the Heikhalot texts or independently of them. Mysticism seems to underscore a particular worldview. Rituals, beliefs and experiences that belong to an entire religious system reach a spiritual climax and are present with special intensity in the mystical dimension of religion. Following such an understanding, it becomes necessary to assess structures and stimuli that could play a role in building up to a potential mystic experience in the artefact. Patterns of thinking indicative of and appropriate to a mystical understanding of Christian experience, the pneumatic epistemology in particular (spirit rapture as the basis for knowing, as indicated in 1.10, 4.2, 17.3 and 21.10), are dominant throughout the Apocalypse. However, the nature of its genre, its shared characteristics and their broad characterization, along with its unique elements, all make the precise setting for the Apocalypse somewhat tenuous.

idea entertained by the mystically oriented readership is that the Apocalypse deals with the very essence of our religious experience, the ontological, cosmological and ideological issues on a conceptual level, as well as the role of spirituality in life.

PART TWO

TAKE UP AND READ

TAKE UP AND READ

No problem can be solved from the same
consciousness that created it.
We need to learn to see the world anew.¹

In Part One, I outlined the principles of cognitive narratology and how they can be applied to the Apocalypse as a whole. The following chapters in Part Two will flesh out my approach in a detailed analysis of selected passages. I will show how the vivid pictorial and imagistic elements of the Apocalypse, combined with literary techniques and the acknowledged oral context, trigger the cognitive structure of the mind and make the narrative intelligible to the extent that it is significantly memorable.² Drawing on the theory of constructivism, the analysis uses modalities of cognitive narratology to illustrate reading experience as a process of meaning-making.³ In particular, I try to illuminate

¹ This is one of the versions of what Einstein is supposed to have said. When the thought is applied to exploring the reading of the Apocalypse the premise is that the narrative of the Apocalypse cannot be analyzed by the same kind of thinking, the same kind of sense of reality, that created it. Because the depicted *world* is a reflection of that very *thinking*, and if the *thinking* is the same, no new insight into the [apocalyptic] *world* is achieved.

² Dorte Berntsen and David C. Rubin show that the recall of emotionally charged memories may be shaped by life scripts, that is, culturally shared expectations as to the order and timing of life events. 'A life script is a culturally shared part of our semantic knowledge, whereas a life story is unique, individual, and part of our autobiographical knowledge. A life script is measured by a request for the events of a stereotypical life within a given culture. This underlines the complexity of structuring a memorable artefact against the backdrop of a given culture.' Berntsen, D. and D. C. Rubin. "Cultural Life Scripts Structure Recall from Autobiographical Memory." *Memory & Cognition* 32 (2004) 427–42.

³ Culler, J. *Structuralist Poetics* 161–88. Edgar McKnight brought forth the convention and procedures whereby readers make sense of texts, even the biblical texts. McKnight, E. V. *The Bible and the Reader: An Introduction to Literary Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985) 131; McKnight, E. V. *Postmodern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-Oriented Criticism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988) 115–31. See also Grenz, S. J. and J. R. Franke. *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) 78–81. John Goldingay discusses some of the implications of the acknowledgment that readers do make sense. Goldingay, J. *Models for Interpretation of Scripture* (Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2004) 46–50.

the phenomenon of apocalypticity, which I introduced in Chapter Three.

The questions that guide the analysis in Part Two are: How does the reader experience positioning in relation to the narrative situations? To what extent is positioning in the Apocalypse dependent on the narratee's active engagement?⁴ What does the reader already know about the 'other' that marks the experience through the difference between real-life experience and the narrated reality? How is the narratee aware about the move between positioning of characters during the reading experience and the creation of meaning? How does the narratee deal with a possible plurality of entities and the experience of an unstable 'other'? By means of such questions, the analysis will eventually substantiate the notion of apocalypticity: the assumption that the reading experience of the Apocalypse creates an alternative form of aesthetic receptivity coupled with an alternative form of narrative construction.⁵ I expect the reading I present will show how the Apocalypse dispenses with the 'wandering viewpoint'⁶ into which the experiences are made to fit. Rather than considering the complexity of the Apocalypse a weakness,⁷ the analysis points to the possibility of structuration through the notion of experientiality. The analysis applies to the Apocalypse the option that narratologist Monika Fludernik proposes for texts which tend to disrupt their expected realistic frames.

⁴ Archakis, A. and A. Tzanne. "Narrative Positioning and the Construction of Situated Identities." *Narrative Inquiry* 15 (2005) 267–91.

⁵ The definition of narrative in terms of a series of actions does not cover plotless texts. Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse* 30; Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) 20; Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction* 15; Stanzel, F. K. *A Theory of Narrative*, transl. C. Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 150; Prince, G. *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987) 58; Bal, M. *Narratology* 16.

⁶ Iser's solution is the well-known 'wandering viewpoint,' which encapsulates the manner in which, in the time-flow of the reading process, past and future continually converge in the present moment. Iser, W. *The Act of Reading* 109.

⁷ Charles, R. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* 1: cxvii–clix. In scholarly research, Charles' position on the peculiar Greek of the Apocalypse was influential for several decades. He presented the author of the Apocalypse as a clumsy, incompetent writer, a muddler of traditions. Court, J. *Myth and History* 14–5; Barr, J. "Jewish Apocalyptic in Recent Scholarly Study." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 58 (1975) 31–2. Charles tended to treat the text as compendia of information, and his main interest lay in identifying allusions, in order to extract theological doctrines, which he assumed to be similar to his own. Collins, J. J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* 11–2.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE POSITIONING – ALIGNING EXPERIENCES

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants
the things which must happen soon, which he sent and made known
by his angel to his servant, John. (1.1)

This chapter deals with ramifications of narrative positioning for the Apocalypse, a requisite for the understanding of the reader's perspective. Positioning gives the reader an active role. It is a given that affects the process of the reading experience and the cognitive apprehension of the artefact. I will deal with how positioning plays a role in identifying positions of adherence and contrast in the cognitive experience of attaining meaning.

After the initial narrative positioning, the events that take shape in the story ensure that a reasserting of positions or a re-positioning occurs. Narratives, for the most part, though with varying degrees of explicitness, begin with constructing identity positions, which are experienced as a part of entering into the narrative situation. Narrative positioning presents an array of denotations that activate the reader's role, such as references to origin, location, relationships, allegiances, and to the worldview. Subsequently, positioning includes descriptions of experiences of possibility, impossibility and necessity.¹ This may invite potential confusion, possible loss of identity, and ways in which identity is retained and regained. Since from the outset the reading becomes an aligning of experiences from text-internal narration with real-life experiential frames, narrative positioning rather than acquaintance with the identity of the author and of the date of the origin of the narrative is the starting point of experiencing the Apocalypse.

Narrative positioning was briefly defined in Chapter One, but further reference to the Apocalypse is helpful for the task of looking into how the aligning of experiences evolves starting from the outset of the narrative. The Apocalypse, as a narrative, begins with a positioning of characters and with their relationships with each other, as well as with

¹ Weber, J. J. *Critical Analysis of Fiction: Essays in Discourse Stylistics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992) 16.

alternating perspectives of the narrating personae. This is part of the narrative in 1.1–10, while following 1.10 the starting positions assume changes of perspectives. Such modifications result from subtle narratological schemata that call for attention. Several elements lead to a reaffirmation or reconsideration of the original frames of perception the reader might initially apply, to make meaning out of seemingly familiar events. Moreover, the launching situation of the Apocalypse does, in fact, include the five experiential variables characteristic for the narrative: time, location, situation, character, and event. However, from the very beginning (1.1–1.9) the reader experiences an ambiguous description of the action through the deictic expression ‘him’, a pronoun with an ambivalent reference.

Similarly, the way Jesus enters the narrative functions as a narratological schema leads to a reflection on positioning. Jesus is introduced with a genitive which can be understood either as an objective genitive or as a subjective genitive, and the options are open. The ‘of’ describing the ‘Apocalypse of Jesus’ can mean either ‘belonging to’ Jesus (subjective genitive, i.e. Jesus’ book) or ‘concerning’ Jesus (objective genitive, i.e. book about Jesus). This places the audience in uncertainty. Although, as Gregory Beale observes, exegetes tend to agree that the genitive is subjective, indicating source,² David Barr is of the opinion that the two optional readings – an apocalypse of Jesus (ownership) and an apocalypse about Jesus (content) – are both plausible, and the syntax supports neither exclusively.³ Thus, the reader has to deal with a situation where it seems conceivable that God reveals something to Jesus, or that God gives a revelation about Jesus to ‘him’, Jesus himself, or to someone still to be introduced. It could even be possible that Jesus is the very God who releases the revelation about his relationship with his servants. Through positioning as aligning of experiences, I show that since any of these renderings govern the reading of the text in the launching situation, experiences from real-life frames and a sense-making process are evoked in the reading. I also show how elements of positioning may raise the reader’s sensitivity to clues either in support of or in contrast to the initial impression and thus set the tone for the subsequent reading of the narrative.⁴

² Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 183.

³ Barr, D. *Tales of the End* 3.

⁴ Hellholm argues that if the conclusion is that God is the originator and Jesus the revealed, that particular reading will govern the reading of the whole text. Hellholm, D.

4.1 THE NARRATIVE SITUATION – THE FIRST MEETING WITH THE 'OTHER'

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave him. (1.1)

At the outset of the Apocalypse, the reader enters a narrative situation where God is the agent. God's agency is introduced in the first verse, he performs the action of giving, releasing the disclosure of Jesus Christ (1.1). The narrative situation implies the presence of God and of Jesus Christ. Existing traditions about God and Jesus as separate entities are present at this point in the narrative although later on in the narration this aspect might be challenged. The reader can infer from the text that Jesus Christ and God dwell in heaven and are engaged in a confidential sharing of some kind. The reader can further assume, from the perspective of actual-world knowledge, that, in order to hand down confidential information, two separate entities are necessary. Therefore, in this situation God and Jesus Christ are most likely experienced as two separate characters. Also from actual-world knowledge Jesus is known as a historical figure and God as the divinity to whom Jesus himself refers as, for example, in the gospel accounts.

The disclosure comes down from the celestial world, the assumed dwelling place of Jesus Christ and his father. There is a cognitive distinction between the context of the narrated opening situation (celestial) and the context and position of the reader (earthly). The celestial context implies difference and otherness both in terms of location and in the manner in which an account or knowing can become accessible. The introductory scene, however, opens to the reader a narrative access to off-stage worlds. The reader cannot assume to know in the actual-world order what takes place between celestial beings and what motivates their actions, but in the narrative one can witness how the action happens. This requires that one should trust a reliable all-knowing third-person voice with access to the innermost thoughts of the celestial beings. A similar third-person narration is familiar from the Gospel narrations. In the Gethsemane scene, the reader is intimately present in the solitude of Jesus although there is supposedly no witness

"The Vision He Saw or: To Encode the Future in Writing. An Analysis of the Prologue of Joh's Apocalyptic Letter." T. Jennings, ed. *Text and Logos. The Humanistic Interpretation of the New Testament* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1990) 120–1.

among the disciples – they are all fast asleep (Mark 14.32–42).⁵

The location and the setting of the narrative are for the main part constructed by the reader, and are not so much based on explicit spatial coordinates as on the knowledge of Jesus Christ and God, collectively passed down through traditions. This launch into the narrative positioning does not differ from the positioning in other narratives where one moves from his or her own world to another and tries to inhabit that otherness. In narratives, the reader has the advantage of knowing the secrets of other worlds, the concealed mind of protagonists guided by a consciousness other than one's own, and the shared code of their interaction. The narrative identification of relationships between God and other possible characters and the link between God's agency and their actions provide grounds for evaluating the respective place of each in the narration, including the reader/narratee him or herself.

4.2 VISIONS OF JESUS: EXPERIENCING THE KNOWN ANEW

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. (1.1)

Although the introductory line does not explicitly identify the recipient of the disclosure, the reader/listener is initially likely to experience Jesus as the recipient of visions. This is in line with some previous knowledge of the audience concerning earlier versions of the story of Jesus. In the positioning of the characters, it is important to note that the Apocalypse seems to attribute to Jesus spontaneous sayings that characterize the recurring theme of John's Gospel and also point to a tradition of circulating sayings of Jesus.⁶ That positioning is constantly part of the reading experience can be briefly demonstrated at this point. The reading experience and narrative mode that are set off in the launching situation are complemented at a later point in the Apocalypse where those

⁵ Perkins, P. "The Synoptic Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. Telling the Christian Story." J. Barton, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 244.

⁶ *He bears witness to what he has seen and heard and yet no one receives his testimony* (John 3.32). Christopher Rowland points out that The Gospel of John is frequently regarded as an example of the type of Christianity, which firmly rejected apocalyptic but, in fact, appears to have a remarkable affinity with the Apocalypse. Rowland, C. "Forward." S. Moyise, ed. *Studies in the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001) x. See also Kanagaraj, J. J. *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John. An Inquiry into its Background* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

who belong to the Jesus tradition are described as those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (12.17). The same word, μαρτυρίαν, is used, and the Apocalypse itself defines this as a possible reading in the introductory scene: the ‘testimony’ of Jesus Christ, as ‘he’ saw it (1.1). Thus, a possible reading of the beginning of the Apocalypse projects the launching situation as an introduction to the testimony, i.e. the visions of Jesus, implying, if not more, that they have been ascribed to Jesus and therefore true.

I wish to point out that positioning is not always intentional or volitional. Any text-related or audience-related thing may allow positioning in ways neither intended nor desired. On the part of the reader/narratee, the logic of positioning is bound to experiential knowledge, even to one’s incomprehension of the storyline at any point, or to one’s capacity of imagination. Also, the initially experienced positioning might be revised at a later time in the reading process. Furthermore, since the narrative outlasts its original audience, later readers, as they narrativize, may dismiss possible experiences that historical readers had found somehow fitting or meaningful. Positioning is a shifting ground.

4.2.1 Visionary Experiences of Jesus

The gospels portray several visionary experiences of Jesus. He is described as being spirit possessed and carried away to a high mountain, where he saw all the cities of the world in a moment of time (Matt 4.8; Luke 4.5 similar to Apocalypse 21.10); at his baptism he saw the heavens open and he heard himself addressed as the ‘Son’ (Mark 1.10,11). The assurance from heaven of being the ‘Alpha and Omega’ is presented, correspondingly, in the Apocalypse 21.5,6. The birth of Jesus is connected to the archangels of the heavenly throne (Luke 1.19) that are referred to as a given in the Apocalypse 8.2. He taught his disciples about the events of the seven seals in the passage known as the Synoptic Apocalypse (Mark 13; Matt 23.1–24.44; Luke 21.5–34),⁷ a widely known

⁷ Which is based on the *Testament of Moses*: Mark 13.2 (TM4.7–9); 13.3 (TM 12.4,5); 13.5 (TM 5.5,6); 13.6–8 (TM 10.6); [Matt 26.9 (TM 8.5)]; 13.12 (TM 9.3–5,7); 13.14 (TM 5.4,5); 13.17 (TM 8.1); 13.21–23 (TM7.10); 13.24 (TM10.1); 13.25 (TM 10.5); 13.26 (TM 10.3,7); 13.27 (TM 10.2); [1Thess. 4.16–17 (TM 10.8–10)]. Hongisto, L. “The Apocalyptic Discourse in Mark 13: Toward a Hermeneutic.” MDiv thesis, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich., 1984 119–26; Gregg, B. H. *The Historical Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 46–8.

oracle.⁸ In the gospel tradition, Jesus is to cast fire on the earth (Luke 12.49), something depicted in the Apocalypse 8.5 and 16.17; and he has seen Satan thrown from heaven (Luke 10.18) as in the Apocalypse 12.10. Jesus told a parable about the angel reapers (Matt 13.36–45), equally so in the Apocalypse 14.15–20; and he prophesied the fall of Jerusalem (Luke 19.41–44) akin to the way depicted in the Apocalypse 11.13. It is also noteworthy that Jesus, reportedly, had an experience of transformation. The Synoptics tell how the appearance of Jesus was changed in form (μετεμορφώθη) before the disciples (Matt 17.2; Mark 9.2; Luke 9.29), a description corresponding to the Apocalypse 1.13,14, and how it was followed by an appearance (ᾤφθη)⁹ of Elijah and Moses (Matt 17.3; Mark 9.4; Luke 9.30) in a pattern similar to the Apocalypse 11.6 (cf. 1Kings 17.1; Ex 7–10,12). The appearance in Mark 9.10 set the disciples to ponder about the resurrection, and their question finds an answer in the Apocalypse 1.18. Jesus was known to have had several encounters with angels, e.g. in Gethsemane (Luke 22.43). Angelology is an overwhelming part of the narrated world of the Apocalypse.

4.2.2 *Corpus of Visionary Sayings*

The contemporaries of the Apocalypse had ample reason to consider the existence of a possible corpus of visionary sayings ascribed to Jesus as well as to the apostles. Paul's indirect 'boasting' (2Cor 12.1–5), the sayings recorded in the Gospel of Thomas with imputed visionary hermeneutics, the evidence for charismatic preachers in the Primitive Church and the example of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures (especially Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zachariah) function as potential source models for a setting to accredit visionary sayings. As part of an established literary tradition, any of these models supports the narratee in a possible framing of the relevance of the vision. This opens another possibility in experiencing the opening scene of the Apocalypse, namely a vision that appropriates Jesus' sayings. That Jesus' visionary sayings were being discussed is supported by the fact that there are some indications of possible contesting versions. One such indication is found in

⁸ Josephus refers to Mark 13.12 as an oracle in the records of the ancient prophets. Flavius Josephus, W. Whiston, and P. L. Maier. *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, transl. W. Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999) 887.

⁹ Either to appear or to be seen as something is initiated by the disciples. Wallace, D. B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 165.

a more or less contemporary but by now mostly lost five-volume work, *The Sayings of the Lord Explained by Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis*,¹⁰ from the early part of the second century CE. Papias lived near Laodicea and Philadelphia only a few years after the traditional date assigned to the Apocalypse. A few short passages from his works have survived as quotations in Eusebius. Papias claims to have carefully learned from the elders and whenever anyone came who had been a follower of the elders. ‘I asked about their words: what Andrew or Peter had said, or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord’s disciples, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord, were still saying.’¹¹ Papias explains that he took special care to teach only what he understood to be true, which he himself had cared to learn from the lips of the original disciples.¹²

Papias’ point of departure with regard to the millennium kingdom (20.4–6) is interesting. His comment indicates a discussion. This leads to the assumption that the reader/narratees may not have reacted in a uniform way to the Apocalypse. There is reason to believe that the dynamics of the original audience were quite complex, including open discussions on the claims of the Apocalypse.¹³ Papias comments:

He [John] says that after the resurrection of the dead there will be a period of a thousand years, when Christ’s kingdom will be set up on this earth in material form. I suppose he got these notions by misinterpreting the apostolic accounts and failing to grasp what they had said in mystic

¹⁰ Hill’s observation on Papias is that he was, above all, a collector of traditions and some traditions will necessarily be trustworthier than others. Hill, C. E. “Papias of Hierapolis.” *The Expository Times* 117 (2006) 309–15.

¹¹ Maier, P. L. *Eusebius – The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999) 127.

¹² Baum, A. D. “Papias als Kommentator evangelischer Aussprüche Jesu.” *Novum Testamentum* 38 (1996) 257–76; Millard A. R. *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 192–5.

¹³ A similar point is made by Bertolt Brecht, according to whom earlier scripts create new emotional effects. Attitudes adopted by audiences/readers include quite private ones, such as utterances of religious faith, which have emerged from earlier scripts. Brecht, B. *Brecht on Theatre*, transl. and ed. J. Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964) 198, 272. The dynamics of the audience and performers include an awareness, however dimly, that they are partaking in a creation that merges various elements in the construction of something new. Ogden, D. H. *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003) 17–8. Sometimes these blends may be conflicting.

and symbolic language.¹⁴

The statement hints at several existing attempts at interpreting apocalyptic visionary accounts bearing reference to millenarian concepts. A rereading of the gospels and the letters gives support to the early view of visionary sayings attributed to both Jesus and the apostles, forming a possible corpus together with the Hebraic sources from which the Apocalypse could have drawn its material. The literary traditions of the period seem to have influenced an ongoing cultivation of apocalypses. As Schüssler Fiorenza points out, the Apocalypse is rooted in early Christian prophetic/apocalyptic circles having access to Johannine as well as Pauline traditions.¹⁵ These reflect the real-life frame of the readers that were accustomed to ‘interpretations that take the form of visionary appropriation’,¹⁶ not unlike the later apocalypse attributed to John Chrysostom.¹⁷ The popularity of ‘revelations’ presenting an apostle or a prominent religious figure in dialogue with Jesus Christ and sharing matters of revealed nature, inspired a wide range of apocalypses.¹⁸ In other words, one plausible reading-experience of the introductory line aligns with a reader relating to accounts of visionary experiences and sayings that were commonly attributed to Jesus.¹⁹

¹⁴ Maier, P. L. *Eusebius – The Church History* 129; Barker, M. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants What Soon Must Take Place* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 77; Barr, D. ed. *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 1.

¹⁵ Schüssler-Fiorenza, E. *The Book of Revelation* 85–113; Pattemore, S. *The People of God in the Apocalypse* 51–67.

¹⁶ Kovacs, J. L. and C. Rowland. *Revelation* 51.

¹⁷ Court, J. M. *The Book of Revelation and the Johannine Apocalyptic Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 67–73; Court, J. M. “The Preacher with a Golden Tongue: John Chrysostom.” J. M. Court, ed. *Biblical Interpretation. The Meaning of Scripture – Past and Present* (London: T & T Clark, 2003) 41–54.

¹⁸ One example is the *Letter of our Lord that Fell from the Sky*, in circulation from the fifth century through the nineteenth. For discussion on the influence of the Apocalypse on later apocalypses, see Baun, J. *Tales from Another Byzantium: Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 76–117.

¹⁹ Early traditions incorporated in the Apocalypse may have included the hypothetical Book of the Lord, a possible text mentioned in Isaiah 34.16. The context in Isaiah suggests that this was an authoritative description of the Day of the Lord, and the prophet could appeal to it to authenticate his own words. No known text bears this title. Discoveries at Qumran and Nag Hammadi are, however, a constant reminder of that many ancient texts whose existence may not be even suspected were known and

4.3 THE MEDIUM OF SHARING GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

Which God gave him ... He made it known by sending his angel. (1.1)

Since God's disclosure takes form in language and in narrative modality, readers need to bear in mind that language does not directly reach their thoughts but addresses their cognitive environment. Thus, the narrator and narratee must share a cognitive environment, and the fact that this environment is shared must itself be manifest.²⁰ According to Émile Benveniste, the 'essence' of language lies in deixis, rather than in reference; thus, what matters in language is not so much the world 'about' which subjects communicate as the constitution of the subjectivity required from us to communicate. Similarly, reading is an attempt to construct that subjectivity so that it can absorb and define itself in the encounter with the experience and knowledge of things. Every utterance is performed by an 'I' and addressed to a 'you'. This narratee (you) is crucial, functioning as the subject who substantiates the 'I', the speaker. Conversely, the 'you' becomes an 'I' with the subjectivity to act, and, hence, to confirm as soon as the perspective shifts.²¹

4.3.1 *Deictic Expressions*

Deictic words like 'you', 'I', 'she', 'this', 'that', 'there', 'now' have no meaning except in relation to other words in a context. Their power lies in this emptiness. Filling of the empty space of a 'you' in a narrative is a

used in first century Palestine. Barker, M. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* 67. The deeper understanding of Gnosticism through the study of the Nag Hammadi texts, as well as the insights into the Qumran community have brought about increased awareness of diverse origins of Christianity and, eventually, a paradigm shift concerning first century normative Christianity. Bock, D. *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth behind Alternative Christianities* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2006).

²⁰ A narrative is informed and shaped by the very language in which it is articulated. Sperber, D. and D. Wilson. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 39, 41–2, 53, 182; Turner, M. *Cognitive Dimensions of Social Science* 9, 138–43; Zunshine, L. *Why We Read Fiction* 159–62; Walsh, R. *Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007) 24–5.

²¹ Cf. the discussion of deixis in chapter 3, page 93, in relation to the implicit Cartesianism of Benveniste's conception of the emergence of subjectivity, which institutes the 'I/ego' as the centre of communicative practice and the 'subjective' ground or 'origo' of deixis. Benveniste, E. *Problems in General Linguistics* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971).

significant task to be assigned to the reader, as writers and rhetoricians have well understood.²² The word 'you' is ready to be filled by anyone. It is empty: it does not refer to anything outside of the situation in which it is uttered. The concept of this emptiness, defined as deixis,²³ is based on the following two suppositions. Firstly, the basic function of deixis is to relate the entities and situations to which reference is made in language to the spatio-temporal zero-point, the here-and-now of the context of the utterance.²⁴ Secondly, the zero point (the here-and-now) is 'egocentric' in the sense that the speaker, by virtue of being the speaker, casts himself in the role of ego and relates everything to his viewpoint.²⁵

The positioning of the narrative characters based on the opening lines allows several optional reading possibilities when filling in the 'empty' deictic pronouns with references. The 'empty' pronouns as they appear in the original text are 'him', 'his', 'he', 'his', 'his', 'who', 'he':

An Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave 'him' (ambivalent reference = a.r.), to show 'his' (a.r.) servants what must happen soon, and 'he' (a.r.) made it know by sending 'his' (a.r.) angel to 'his' (a.r.) servant John, 'who' (a.r.) testifies to the word of God, namely to the testimony of Jesus Christ, (that is) to whatever 'he' (a.r.) saw.

Narrativizing with 'Jesus' filling the deictic pronouns:

An Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave 'him' (Jesus), to show 'his' (Jesus') servants what must happen soon, and 'he' (Jesus) made it known by sending 'his' (Jesus') angel to 'his' (Jesus') servant John, 'who' (Jesus) testifies to the word of God, namely to the testimony of Jesus Christ, (that is) to whatever 'he' (Jesus) saw.

In this sample, Jesus consistently can fill all the open pronominal refer-

²² Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria* 9.3.38–9.

²³ Kacandes, I. "Are You In the Text?: The 'Literary Performative' in Postmodernist Fiction." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 13 (1993) 139–53; Fludernik, M. "Virgin Territories: The Strategic Expansion of Deictic Option." M. Bal, ed. *Narrative Theory. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004) 57–92.

²⁴ Lyons, J. "Deixis and Subjectivity: Loquor, Ergo Sum?" R. J. Jarvella and W. Klein, eds. *Speech, Place, and Action: Studies in Deixis and Related Topics* (Chichester: John Wiley, 1982) 121.

²⁵ Jones, P. E. "Philosophical and Theoretical Issues in the Study of Deixis: A Critique of the Standard Account." K. Green, ed. *New Essays on Deixis: Discourse, Narrative, Literature* (Amsterdam: Radopi, 1995) 27–8.

ences. Other deictic references, ‘soon’ and ‘whatever,’ remain to be filled. Moreover, constant attention to verbal distinctions of voice, mood and especially tense is imperative in Greek. The array of tenses is enough to confuse the fine distinctions between certain aspects of the verb (much of which cannot be straightforwardly rendered into English).

In the attempt to narrativize and fill the empty deictic words with meaning, the narratee encounters indistinctness, multiple viewpoints, category affiliations and in-group relations. The narratee is forced to consider the dynamics of identity construction in context.²⁶ The narration relies on a series of narrative crossroads which, following a network of if/then choices, take the reading forward to the next development: if A, then X is applicable, leading to this nature of the event; if ‘he’ had been Y, then the outcome would have been different. At every branching of the way, the reader has a fresh doubling of the possibilities, following series of patterns looking ahead to the future and back at the past, in the narrative as well as the real-life frame.

4.3.2 Gave ‘Him’

Does the dative αὐτῷ refer to Jesus Christ? The deictic word ‘him’ has no meaning except in relation to other words and to a context. Its power lies in its openness expected to be filled with a reference. Filling the empty space of a deictic word can be ‘wonderfully stirring’ for a reader, as writers and rhetoricians have known since ancient times.²⁷ The empty word ‘him,’ as a pronoun, refers to a noun that the reader/listener fills with what precedes it in the same sentence: Jesus Christ.

To give a disclosure to Jesus, the disclosed, does not seem logical at first. Does God give Jesus who shares divinity with him a reaffirmation about ‘himself’? The narration goes on in 1.5,6 to describe the one who loves us and has freed us and made us priests to his God. This indicates that Jesus has a God and Father who can give a disclosure to ‘him’. From a real-life frame of a family metaphor, a projected father-son symbolism, there is no discrepancy in the God, the Father, having to pass down knowledge to his ‘equal’ son. The narration keeps up this impression in 2.28 where Jesus tells having ‘received’ from the father.

²⁶ Hiles, D. “Identity Positioning: Narrative Analysis of *Sjuzhet* and *Fabula*.” D. Robinson, N. Kelly, and K. Milnes, eds. *Narrative & Memory* (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2007) 33–41.

²⁷ Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria* 9.22.38,39.

Later in the narrative this same Jesus will make us a pillar in the shrine of his God, write the name of his God on us. The city coming down out of heaven from his God, the new Jerusalem, is the city of his God (3.12). In the narrative both the separation and the assimilation between God and Jesus are part of the action that defines the story.²⁸

If Jesus is considered to be the receiver of the visions – for which there is ample reason from a narration internal perspective and from external evidence of visionary sayings – the possibility of the third-person singular dative pronoun ‘him’ being John needs still to be accounted for. After all, it is John, who is the one reporting about the disclosure in the narrative setting starting from 1.9. Then John could also be the ‘who’ (1.2) that witnesses to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, as well as the ‘him’ of the main clause of 1.1. However, the qualifying statement that ‘he’ made it known by sending ‘his’ angel to ‘his’ servant John (1.1) complicates the identification of John as the reference for ‘him’. If John were the ‘him’ the receiver and the ‘he’ who makes known, then John would be sending an angel to himself. According to 22.6, the ‘he’ who made it known is the Lord God of the spirits and of the prophets who sent his angel. Thus, the way the audience would spontaneously have filled in the deictic ‘him’ as referring to Jesus is somewhat challenged, although a moment later the conception is confirmed. However, the confirmation in 22.16 where Jesus states that I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give this testimony complicates the relationship between senders. That Jesus is the receiver, the one to whom God gave the visions, while his servant John reports the whole chain of events for the benefit of all, is a plausible assumption in the semantic field deriving from a real-life frame of royal positioning which includes authorial figures that delegate to servants (1.1) and priests (1.6). By implication, receivers of the word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ participate in the telling, as they are the ones who see, read and hear, the fellow brothers and servants.

From the initial positioning, the narrative illustrates the difficulty of establishing a character, how traits overlap, and what can unexpectedly be experienced as part of the other. The dual image of the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ is recurrently mentioned in the

²⁸ Throughout the Apocalypse, the pictorial and metaphoric language creates a movement between separation and assimilation. An illustration is the merging of the source of light of the new Jerusalem where God’s glory gives light and the Lamb is the lamp (21.23).

narrative. The occurrences in 1.2; 1.9; 6.9; 19.9,10; and 20.4, in addition to the duality implicitly present in the imagery of the Apocalypse, sustain the vague characterization of God and Jesus in the first line. The narrative reconfirms both figures as the potential source and potential content for the disclosure in the Apocalypse. Throughout the narrative, a tension of a contrasting experience of sameness and difference is present which can be referred back to the dim recognition of source and receiver. In the experience of reading the Apocalypse the reader starts off as a narratee being intrigued to clarify the function of the 'other' in an otherworldly context.

Together with the experiencing John, the reader is an experiencing 'I' as well as an evaluating, reflecting, framing, narrating 'I'. In this way, the story gains perspective. This in spite of the fact that, for the most part, it is assumed that reader/narratees seldom consciously stop to make a distinction between the many, sometimes ambiguous, ways the narrative represents the consciousness of characters.²⁹ The reader thus tunes in to a positioning that creates character ambiguity as the source of disclosure. Consequently, those readers who choose to enter the world of the Apocalypse meet an unknown sublime world of eternal beings. It is this otherworldliness, to which those narratees not only grant a high degree of mystic power but which they also seek as their own experience. This ambiguity also includes a contradiction of putting into use what is already known about the disclosed, and of annulling the temporal overlaps of seeing and having seen. The audience, like John, is both experiencing and narrating their experience, filling the gaps between two worlds, creating meaning through this encounter. It is intriguing for the reader to enter this 'otherness', which he or she as a narratee re-tells for him or herself, as a situation signifying how God's secrets are made known.

4.3.3 'He' Sent

Significant to the experience of the Apocalypse is the way in which the disclosure reaches the one who reports it and thereafter us the readers and narratees. Because of the opening statement, the narratee expects an angel to narrate information. A reader educated in the Hebrew Scriptures expects a scene as described in the book of Daniel where Daniel encounters an angel (Daniel 10.5–7). This is confirmed in 1.12–

²⁹ Herman, L. and B. Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* 27–30.

17. Yet, after the depiction of John's first encounter with the supposed angelic figure, the angel, surprisingly, identifies himself with narrative external traits commonly ascribed to Jesus – I am the first and the last. I was dead but look, I am alive (1.17,18).³⁰ Consequently, John's falling at the angel's feet feels right for the reader. In the narrative, there are three occasions when John falls at the feet of an angelic-like figure. In 22.8,9, the figure identifies itself as an angel and denounces John's worshipping by falling at its feet. In 19.10, the identification of the figure is ambiguous, but the instruction to only worship God is clearly specified. In the first encounter between John and the angelic-like figure (1.17) the appearance identifies itself as the first and the last, bringing about an experience of meeting God as someone worthy of worship.

The surprising shift in the telling makes the reader's tentative confusion and assumptions of who is sending and reporting the vision a non sequitur. For example, if Jesus is the one who receives the disclosure from God and sends his angel to deliver it to John, then the scene John sees would be experienced as Jesus having sent himself as an angel. Although such initial discrepancy may fade to the background as the reader actively shifts to partaking in the testimony, the positioning differs from familiar categories of narrator (giver) and actor (character). Rather than an analytical positioning, the introductory line seems to be rooted in cognitive parameters that motivate crisscrossing. With regard to the emerging narrative mode of the Apocalypse, the position-

³⁰ Angelomorphic characteristics and functions in the characterization of Jesus in the Apocalypse have led to several levels of discussion on the roles of angels and their possible affiliation with the Jesus concept. The evidence should neither be ignored nor marginalized; it shows how Jewish angelology influenced the portrayal of Christology in the Apocalypse. Furthermore, in light of the rich heritage of angelic theophanies in the Hebrew Scripture and Jewish apocalyptic literature, the angelomorphic Christology only serves to exalt the status of Jesus, who is, throughout the Apocalypse, clearly paired with God. Pairing is found in 6:17; 7:10; 11:15; 12:10; 14:4; 20:6; 21:22,23; 22:1,3. For discussion on the pairing as a reflection of the author's monotheistic concerns, see Bauckham, R. "The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity." *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981) 330–1; Stuckenbruck, L. T. *Angel Veneration and Christology* 261–5; Brighton, L. "The Angel of Revelation: An Angel of God and an Icon of Jesus Christ." Ph.D. diss., (St. Louis University, 1991) 7–13; Gundry, R. "Angelomorphic Christology in the Book of Revelation." *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 33 (1994) 662–78; Carrell, P. *Jesus and the Angels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 130–8. A sceptic of angelomorphic Christology like Dunn acknowledges its presence in the Apocalypse. Dunn, J. D. G. *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) xxvi.

ing indicates a complex setting for the reporting: a narrative strategy that triggers new beginnings and prismatic reflections of events, thus leading to a double conception of the narrative, as report and experience.

Repeatedly in the narrative, the reader expects an occurrence, yet he meets with something quite different. The reading experience is constituted of several sequels leading to unexpected shifts of scenery. Each seventh item in a sequel becomes a transition to something unexpected, which is equally confusing as it also opens up new expectations. This sort of thing is anticipated in 1.17,18, in Jesus replacing what the reader thought of as an angel; in 3.20–4.1, the open door does not lead to Jesus stepping in to dine but to ushering John to step up into the space of God's throne – thus, the sequel is not completed and a new sequel starts. In 8.1, as soon as the reader is well accustomed to opening the seals revealing different happenings, the seventh seal is silence (empty) – the seals are not completed, and a new sequel starts; in 11.15–12.1 Christ has become the ruler of the world, to reign forever and ever, yet what is thought to be the fulfilment of all expectations turns out to be a new sequel of signs, of which the first is a woman giving birth, as if to return to a new beginning; in 14.6, after a sequel of flashbacks of celestial interaction with humanity, the last sign does not lead to a resolution, instead a new sequel of angelic warnings starts as alternative ways of reaping the results of life; in 15.1, after the seventh angel throws the sickle to harvest, the expected ending is transformed into seven bowls of wrath, again completion is not reached and a new sequel starts; in 16.17 a return to the descending of the two cities, Babylon and Jerusalem, surprisingly throws the reader into a circular movement, back to events that have already been experienced (being on mount Zion in 14.1 and the fall of Babylon in 14.8). The narration of these scenes builds on interruptions and displacements in the spatial, temporal and cognitive positioning of the reader experience. This movement is evident in the initial positioning, as the story moves past the first mention of the angel that is sent but never came, his role being taken over by Jesus.

4.4 THE FORM OF VISIONARY APPROPRIATION

John who witnessed,
to the word of God and to the witness of Jesus Christ, as he saw it. (1.2)

The mode of spirit rapture is central to the staging of the Apocalypse. In the narrative, everything that is experienced happens in this ecstatic state of mind.³¹ The narrator John indicates that he is in spirit rapture in 1.9, similarly he experiences the heavenly throne setting through a pneumatic epistemology (4.2). Likewise he perceives Babylon (17.3) and the depiction of the new Jerusalem through the means of the spirit (21.10). Yet, the writing tradition of the mystics is equally present. The experience of being in the spirit is reported and complemented with the vocabulary, motifs and ideas that have common traits with the traditions of the mystics of its time.³² Some of these common elements will be explicated below, especially as they relate to the words ‘as he saw it’ and to the necessity to write and to preserve the secrets: ‘write what you saw’ (1.11; cf. 22.18,19).

4.4.1 *John’s Own Vision*

In order to present the framework of the events of the Apocalypse, the narrative tends to fall back on the two qualifying entities – God’s Word and Jesus’ testimony – to explain the presence of the character John on the island of Patmos as the narrative setting (1.2,9). If the narrator intended to signify a distinction between the ‘word of God’ and the ‘testimony of Jesus Christ’, on the one hand, and the narrated personal experiences, on the other, there should be a καὶ before or after the pronoun ὅσα in 1.2.³³ However, since there is no such conjunction within the narrative time frame of the Lord’s Day, these two entities, the testimony of the divine word and of Jesus, and that of the narrator John, become one grand testimony re-enacted in a new context, the Apocalypse.³⁴

³¹ An experience in rapture would not involve reporting, writing or other communication as supposed in the natural world. Although these are frequently referred to in the text, they would, of course, have been impossible in the real-life context of spirit rapture.

³² Arbel, V. D. *Beholders of Divine Secrets* 144–8.

³³ Hellholm, D. “The Vision He Saw” 123–7.

³⁴ As to the role of the awareness of construct and self-consciousness in the production of an artefact, Hayden White is of the opinion that the more attention is paid to the social system, to the law sustaining it and the authority of this law, to its justification

Did John go to Patmos hoping to achieve spirit rapture? The reference of the relative pronoun ὅσα in 1.2 ('the things' which he saw, referring to the content of the Apocalypse) has a decisive bearing on the rendering of 1.9. As the opening verses indicate, John's testimony is 'the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ', in other words, the Apocalypse that he is about to narrate. Therefore a reading of the phrase 'because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ' in 1.9 as denoting possible persecution because of his personal (or others') testimony, goes against the narration and the historical framework discussed under 'Experience of Cognitive Dissonance' (Chapter Three). Therefore, John could be on the isle of Patmos not *because of* the testimony but rather *for the sake of* the testimony, *so as to receive* the testimony. Thus, a paraphrase of 1.9 could be: 'I happened (came) to be on the isle called Patmos to receive the word of God and the testimony of Jesus – I came to be in the spirit.'

The described vision has counterparts with several of the Jewish and Christian apocalypses, which describe ascents through heaven and contain Merkabah motifs. Within the narrative, it is logical to agree with the prologue that the narrative is about God's word and the testimony of Jesus. The portrayed spirit rapture supports the notion of a mystic setting for a spiritual experience. From a spiritual point of view, the epistemological setting of spirit rapture presents an alternative world within which to deal with the word of God, that of the prophets, and the testimony of Jesus, and God's mystery (10.7; cf. 1Cor 2.10 and 1Cor 14.26, which is comparable to the spirit addressing the assemblies in the Apocalypse). Besides the Merkabah mysticism and the gospel accounts, there are numerous references to the role of an apocalypse in the writings attributed to Paul and Peter.³⁵ Moreover, the Jesus apoca-

and to threats to it, the more the artefact reflects a historical self-consciousness. White, H. "The Value of Narrativity" 13. Likewise, in a reading of the Apocalypse, the awareness of that we gain of the construction of the narrative has an effect on our reading and, through it, on our experience of receiving God's word and the testimony of Jesus.

³⁵ God's day of wrath and apocalypse (Rom 2.5); Creation waits eagerly for the apocalypse of the sons of God (Rom 8.19); The apocalypse of the mystery (Rom 16.25); Awaiting eagerly the apocalypse of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor 1.7); Speak with an apocalypse (1Cor 4.6); Each one has an apocalypse (1Cor 14.26); The visions and the apocalypse from the Lord in heavenly tours (2Cor 12.1–7); Received through an apocalypse of Jesus Christ (Gal 1.12); Because of the apocalypse (Gal 2.2); Apocalypse with the knowledge of Him (Eph 1.17); Apocalypse made known the mystery (Eph 3.3,4); Relief to the afflicted in the apocalypses, the Lord Jesus of heaven with mighty angels

lypse tradition is the basis for Paul's apostolic authority (2Cor 12.1–7). Therefore, it naturally follows that the rapture experience described in the Apocalypse aligns with these models. On the basis of this real-life frame of spiritual search³⁶ and from the ambiguity of the textual occurrence 'I came to be in the spirit ... to receive the word of God' (1.9) the reader can tentatively conclude that the narrated rapture enhances the experience of connectedness to the eternal.

All of these narratives revolve around various imagistic concepts combining apocalypse, testimony and spirit as one. They question human rationality and perception as a basis for knowing hidden things, as if wanting to say that reason is not enough, that revelation is needed to make sense of reality.

Through the spirit rapture setting, John as the narrator makes use of the visionary appropriation of God's word, the word of the prophets, and the testimony of Jesus. These evoke images from the past, which he integrates afresh in the vision.³⁷ In tailoring together and expanding upon traditional biblical elements, the narrator employs both the narrating 'I' and the experiencing 'I' in re-formulating the mystery of God as he has told it to his servants the prophets (10.7). Constructing upon the setting, the narrator draws attention to the chorus, a narrative aside in the style of Greek drama, which includes all of humanity singing the song of God's servant, Moses, and of the Lamb (15.3) in an act of worship together with God's prophets (18.24). The servants are again present in the activity of two witnesses (chapter 11) who adhere to the words of the Apocalypse (22.8). The text actually defines being in the spirit as adherence to the tradition of the testimony of Jesus (19.10). All that is vital and central is made known in and through the spirit (22.17)

An example of how the Apocalypse as a visionary appropriation of John's experience blends a known picture from the Hebrew Scriptures is the use of Hosea 10.8, where the Israelites say to the mountains, And 'Cover us!' to the hills, 'Fall on us!' John's interpretation reverses the

in flaming fire dealing out retribution to those who do not obey (2Thess 1.7); Those tested by fire may be found to result in praise and glory and honour within apocalypsis of Jesus Christ (1Pet 1.7); Therefore prepare your minds for actions, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace which is given to you in apocalypsis of Jesus Christ (1Pet 1.13).

³⁶ Cf. Dan 10.2 and Acts 9.3–7.

³⁷ Kovacs, J. L. and C. Rowland. *Revelation* 51.

roles: the kings of the nations and the great men, the commanders, the rich and strong, and every slave and free man – who supposedly do not know the Hebrew Scriptures – say to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and Cover us’ (6.15,16).

The complex reuse of the Hebrew scriptural tradition in the Apocalypse creates reader involvement. However, as Steve Moyise³⁸ acknowledges, some of the readings of the tradition the Apocalypse evokes would have been surprising to the narrative audience. Both Robert Royalty and Allison Jack³⁹ even maintain that ancient texts were corrupted. Others, such as David Mathewson, argue that the plurality of semantic effects leads to a stable if complex vision portrayed by the Apocalypse.⁴⁰ Mathewson makes the valid point that the notion of ‘dialogical tension’ needs qualifying, since the suggested dynamic reality where the reader participates in the creation of meaning rather than receives a fixed stable interpretation, is in conflict with the claim that the Apocalypse does indeed offer a resolution.⁴¹ It is the intricate and often implicit construction of conceptual and intertextual blends in the Apocalypse that challenges the reader.⁴² The text elucidates none of these complexities.

Consequently, in John’s Apocalypse the visions of previous prophets are ‘seen’ again, in a different time and place. The blurring of identity and time is apparent and a mental dislocation brings about an experience by the reader that the ‘normal’ is not the only imaginable way of

³⁸ Moyise, S. “Intertextuality and the Book of Revelation.” *Expository Times* 104 (1993) 295–8; Moyise, S. *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*.

³⁹ Royalty, R. M. *The Streets of Heaven* 40, 48, 63; Jack, A. *Texts Reading Texts, Sacred and Secular* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 93–4.

⁴⁰ Mathewson, D. *A New Heaven and a New Earth. The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1–22.5* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) 122.

⁴¹ Mathewson, D. *A New Heaven and a New Earth* 175.

⁴² An example of conceptual and intertextual blending was the experience of the audience of Marita Liulia’s exhibition ‘Choosing My Religion’ (Kiasma, Helsinki, 13.2–19.4.2009). The title awakened a renewed awareness of the rock band R.E.M.’s hit song ‘Losing My Religion’ (released 1991) to the extent that the tune echoed in the audience’s mind. Even though Marita Liulia did not refer to the song, the audience experienced that her work tackled positioning one’s self in the scene of religious traditions using the association between ‘choosing’ and ‘losing.’ This made the song a possible counterpart that induced meaning into a later artefact, though it was not explicitly referred to. Liulia, M. *Choosing My Religion – Uskontoja jäljittämässä*, transl. M. Garner (Helsinki: Maahenki, 2009); Buckley, D. *R.E.M.: Fiction: An Alternative Biography* (London: Virgin Books, 2003) 205.

reading, seeing, or thinking.⁴³ Thus, the recognition of intertextuality does not explain the Apocalypse; rather, it provides a conceptual background for understanding what is at stake in the narrative. The assessment that a text has one single meaning, reinterpreting existing texts in the light of new presuppositions, could be seen as a distortion of the narrative process.⁴⁴ For example, the Apocalypse is clearly neither continuing nor interpreting any of Ezekiel's themes, on several of which it draws, in its own way. However, in a reading process texts can change their meaning or 'bend' it, as Paul Decock⁴⁵ puts it, when relocated into new contexts.⁴⁶

The reader experiences a blend of concepts from an evoked existing tradition but in a veiled manner. It is in a way a distraction from the constructed nature of the narration. As a result, the Apocalypse turns life into a storehouse from which material is drawn.⁴⁷ Similarly, a literary text, partly drawing from that storage, partly adding new experiences re-describes the world for its reader/audience.⁴⁸ The direct consequence of this text-reader relationship is the transformation of interpretation into a dynamic dialectic between the distancing of the text and the appropriation of the reader. 'Reading is the pharmakon, the "remedy", by which the meaning of the text is rescued from the estrangement of distancing and put in a new proximity which suppresses and preserves the cultural distance and includes the otherness within the ownness'.⁴⁹ The instability of positioning, as in the case of John's vision, is part of this phenomenon.

⁴³ Kovacs, J. L. and C. Rowland. *Revelation* 51.

⁴⁴ Paulien and Beale propose a semitic paratactic thinking, which allowed for the setting in close proximity of two different, and sometimes seemingly contradictory, ideas or sets of words. Paulien, J. "Dreading The Whirlwind" 5–22; Beale, G. K. *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* 47.

⁴⁵ Decock, P. "The Scriptures in the Book of Revelation." *Neotestamentica* 33 (1999) 373–410. See also Moyise, S. "Intertextuality, Historical Criticism and Deconstruction." T. L. Brodie, D. R. Macdonald, and S. E. Porter, eds. *The Intertextuality of the Epistles. Explorations of Theory and Practice* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006) 24–34.

⁴⁶ For conceptual blending, see Lundhaug, H. "Conceptual Blending in the *Exegesis on the Soul*." P. Luomanen, I. Pyysiäinen, and R. Uro, eds. *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 158.

⁴⁷ Iser, W. *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 244.

⁴⁸ Ricoeur, P. *Interpretation Theory* 36–7.

⁴⁹ Ricoeur, P. *Interpretation Theory* 43.

4.4.2 *As He Saw It*

John the narrator receives access to the vision that is qualified with the statement: ‘As he saw it’ (1.2). As an elusive deictic reference, the pronoun ‘he’ could potentially refer to Jesus who according to the very first words of the text, is the likely receiver of the vision. Such a rendering would be in line with the corpus of the tradition referred to above (apocalypses attributed to Jesus), whatever Jesus had seen. However, other renderings are made equally possible by the sentence structure.⁵⁰

For the reader, the natural rendering for ‘as he saw it’ would imply that John’s narrative is contingent on the accuracy of his observation and on the depth of his understanding. As the narrative becomes familiar to the reader, it works through optional multiple frames of experiencing. It provides diverse choices for the acting agents, and, by doing so, introduces a two-voice scheme that frames the narrative as a whole: a nameless narrator, the one that has been introducing the reader to the narrative world of the Apocalypse and John, the one telling his vision. The nameless narrator is the voice that starts the narrative. Other than fulfilling the function of positioning the characters and launching the situation, the reader does not know at this point of any particular purpose or identity of what he experiences as a nameless consciousness – a co-narrating voice to John. Later in the narrative, this becomes more evident, since, in addition to John’s voice, the co-narrator confers about the state of things as John experiences them. The juxtaposition of the two voices thus shapes the meaning creation of the reading experience.⁵¹

The privileged nameless co-narrator knows that the ‘him’, who is the narrator presenting the disclosure described as ‘the word of God and the testimony of Jesus’, is John. The co-narrator introduces the ‘him’ to the reader by stating that God/Jesus addressed their servant John (1.1).

⁵⁰ David Hellholm argues that, in this second hierarchic embedded narrative, Christ is the agent, and, in the third, John. Hellholm, D. “The Vision He Saw” 110, 116.

⁵¹ As it may be that the concept of ‘voice’ is ambiguous and can be reduced to a rhetorical strategy nonetheless cognitively oriented theories of narrative bring the ‘natural’ voice to the fore. Reading being a variant of hearing, the illusion of audibility resides in the traces of the narrative’s artistic organization, including the expression of ideology or existential attitudes. Jongeueel, E. “Silencing the Voice in Narratology.” A. Blödorn, D. Langer, and M. Scheffel, eds. *Stimme(n) im Text: Narratologische Positionsbestimmungen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006) 9–30.

The co-narrator also knows that John will narrate the disclosure – as ‘he’ saw it. The co-narrator is in full command because he appears to possess the intelligence, knowledge, eloquence, vivacity, rhetoric, and ideology that direct the narrative. His position differs from the voice of his counterpart John in that he, as co-narrator, uses an explanatory voice, which becomes apparent in the positioning of his interventions throughout the narrative.⁵²

The third-person co-narrator has no articulated shape, individual identity or status of personhood, and this boundlessness is one of his salient qualities in allowing the reader to attribute authority to his speech. Seen in this way, John’s voice is a creation made specifically with the reader in mind, whereas John’s co-narrator may be an objective counterpart through the more directly informative content he presents. The major role John’s voice plays is one marker of the significance of the reader-focus in the Apocalypse. Similarly, this also attributes importance to the co-narrator in his task of setting John’s narration into perspective. By commenting on John’s narration from a narrative strategic point of view, intervening regularly between John’s reports of whatever he saw (1.2), the co-narrator establishes his role as an interrogating consciousness. At the same time, this brings the audience who witness John’s experience into a privileged position in co-experiencing the narrative and in observing it.

In a way, it would be possible to view the Apocalypse itself as ‘whatever he saw’, as a more or less logical structured report from an observer who pieced together a testimony of what he saw that tracks the way the visionary event could have taken place. As such, it would represent a sequence of events generating a point of view. Thus, the narrative would be a report of an event structure displaying very little subjectivity, a systematic recollection of the visionary event. Then again, the subjectivity of the reporter can become an issue, without the reporter necessarily intending it, in spite of his earnest attempt to render the events exactly as they happened. However, the emotional struggle apparent in the reporting voice of John and reflected in the unstable spatial and temporal frames as he attempts to unfold the events reveals subjectivity by inference. The imagistic character of the narrative com-

⁵² Lee, D. *The Narrative Asides in the Book of Revelation* (New York: University Press of America, 2002). As narrative asides fulfill a prominent function in the narration of the Apocalypse, it is somewhat disappointing that Lee does not excavate the exegetical function and meaning of these narrative asides in the story of the Apocalypse.

pels us to infer a subjectivity that we wrap around the event as a frame. It is human to respond to observation, while an observer who has no human investment in the experience of the event, would have to be a figment of imagination. Our experience of the world compels us to attribute such non-involvement to a peculiar personality, a potentially autistic narrator. A demand for objectivity could evolve only around the notion of a voice whose subjectivity has been destroyed. ‘As he saw it’ qualifies for the account’s subjectivity while the co-narrator of the Apocalypse takes the heat off John who may appear as an unsound narrator. The co-narrator’s guaranteed ‘whatever he saw’ or ‘as he saw it’ strengthens the voice of a genuine and trustworthy narrative with a life-like ability to experience.

This polyvocal introduction sets the tone for the evaluation of the characters and their actions throughout the narrative. The positioning of the narrative characters based on the opening lines, as observed above (4.3 Deictic Expressions), allows several optional reading possibilities when filling in the ‘empty’ deictic words with references. Thus, narrativizing with John as ‘him’ and ‘who’ and the final ‘he’ as the receiver and the one who testifies, and with God or Jesus filling the other positions, yields the following optional reading:

An Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, which God gave ‘him’ (John) to show ‘his’ (God’s/Jesus’) servants what must happen soon, and ‘he’ (God/Jesus) made it known by sending ‘his’ (God’s/Jesus’) angel to ‘his’ (God’s/Jesus’) servant John ‘who’ (John) testifies to the word of God, namely to the testimony of Jesus Christ, (that is) to everything ‘he’ (John) saw.

From a real-life frame, this option seems also a meaningful reading. John is the one who, in the narration, is caught in spirit rapture and observes what he is to show to his fellow servants.

4.5 THE SWEET BITTERNESS OF READING

Fortunate is the one who reads and those who hear the words
of this prophecy, and keep to what is written in it (1.3)

The narratee hears the promise of a blessing given to all readers, hearers and adherents of the Apocalypse. Reading can refer to a performance act⁵³ as well as to the mental process of the narratee, as Stephen Pattemore suggests. That the text is intended to be read aloud to an audience comes by deduction from the text itself,⁵⁴ and is part of the interrelated dynamics of writing, reading and performing in an ancient culture where written documents were rare and highly esteemed. The attestation by heavenly creatures merits the act of recording, and that which is recorded merits adherence.⁵⁵ Reading, hearing and adhering are privileges granted to those who are addressed by the act of God's disclosure.

Certain commentators emphasize that hearing the Apocalypse produces an experience that compels to adhere to that which the narrative specifically instructs to do. According to Gregory Beale, the blessing is for those who obey what is asserted to be divine imperatives.⁵⁶ This implies that the reader should be aware that the Apocalypse is to be prized for more than just for its aesthetic value. In other words, the medium bears witness to something apart from it (1.2),⁵⁷ the authority of which is repeatedly indicated in the narration (2.7,11,17,29; 3.6,13,22).⁵⁸ A feature essential to the Apocalypse turns out to be the authoritative voice that transcends the text, a text that is not oblivious to aesthetic considerations aimed at engaging the senses of the narratees.

The narration of the Apocalypse directs the narratee to a search for existential and cognitive truth from heavenly voices. These elemental concerns together with celestial answers form the voice of the Apocalypse. For its tone, the narrative identifies multiple possible vocal and

⁵³ Pattemore, S. *The People of God in the Apocalypse* 53.

⁵⁴ 1Cor 14.26 implies that a reading of an apocalypse was a standard part of early Christian liturgy. Bauckham, R. *The Climax of Prophecy* 2–3.

⁵⁵ Arbel, V. D. *Beholders of Divine Secrets* 144–8.

⁵⁶ Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 184–6.

⁵⁷ The Apocalypse makes overt claims to authority while it is subtle concerning the role of the narrator. Carey, G. *Elusive Apocalypse: Reading Authority in the Revelation of John* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999) 108–14.

⁵⁸ *He who has an ear let him hear what the spirit says.*

sound sources and their qualities as well as their positions. The voice like a trumpet coming from behind (1.12; 4.1); the voice of the sound of many waters (1.15); the voice of angels (5.2,12; 7.2; 10.3; 14.7,9,15,18; 18.2; 19.17); the roaring voice of a mighty angel (10.3); the thundering voice of one of the living creatures (6.1); the loud voice of the souls (6.10); the voice of a great crowd (7.10); the voice of an eagle (8.13); the voice from heaven (10.8; 14.2); the voice from the throne (16.17; 19.5). They all speak through their frame of existence in real-life experiences full of tumultuous voices.

In keeping with the very nature of apocalyptic, the Apocalypse builds up a spatial-temporal construction of its own by drawing upon realms of existence and traditions that every potential reader could identify with, regardless of time and place. This, in turn, pulls the audience deeper in the world of the Apocalypse by opening up a possibility for reader exploration of those very references. By incorporating familiar traditions found in Ezekiel,⁵⁹ Daniel,⁶⁰ Zechariah,⁶¹ Enoch writings⁶² and the Qumran documents⁶³ that provide access to off-stage worlds, the Apocalypse offers a wider stage and perspective. As the narrative frame keeps moving, alternative perspectives come easily into view, especially for those familiar with the tradition(s).

⁵⁹ The setting of the narrative, 1.1–3,9 ≈ Eze 1.1; The synagogue of Satan, 2.9,13–16 ≈ Eze 20.10–24; The heavenly throne, 4.1–8 ≈ Eze 4–28; The sealing of the faithful, 7.3 ≈ Eze 9.4; The enthroned Lamb as the shepherd, 7.17 ≈ Eze 34.23,24; Eating the scroll, 10.10 ≈ Eze 3.1–3; Measuring the temple, 11.1; 21.15 ≈ Eze 40.3; The seven angels of wrath, 16.1–21 ≈ Eze 9.1–11; The infamous rich city, 18.9–24 ≈ Eze 26.17,18; 27.1–36; The fate of Gog, 19.17–21; 20.8 ≈ Eze 39.1–20; The visions of Jerusalem, 21.9–27, cf. Eze 40.1–43.5; The river flowing from the temple; the tree of life, 22.1,2 ≈ Eze 47.1–12.

⁶⁰ Beale, G. K. “The Influence of Daniel Upon the Structure and Theology of John’s Apocalypse.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984) 413–23.

⁶¹ Jauhiainen, M. *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*.

⁶² Numerous affinities with the Book of Jubilees are indisputable. In addition, the Exagoge of Ezekiel is an early and significant example of competing Enochic and Mosaic paradigms in Second Temple Judaism. In the Enochic writings, the esoteric revelation received by Enoch in his ascent to heaven is presented as superior to the covenantal law received by Moses in a descent of God to earth. However, by equalling Moses with Enoch, the drama presents an exalted Moses in line with Philo, who elevated Moses as both god and ideal king. Meeks, W. “Moses as God and King.” J. Neusner, ed. *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 354–71. For further comments on the Exagoge of Ezekiel, see Ruffato, K. J. “Polemics with Enochic Traditions” 195–210.

⁶³ O’Neill, J. C. “‘Who is Comparable to me in My Glory?’” 24–38.

After hearing, reading and narrativizing the vivid experiences throughout the narrative, the reader meets, on the final stretch and quite unexpectedly, a volte-face. The Apocalypse starts out with a call to be receptive to the narration (1.3) as an actively selective and identifying process. In reading, the narratee formulates intelligible speech from the imagistic, in other words, narrativizes from what he or she takes in, and, in an ideal case, cherishes the narration and actually becomes one of the privileged to eat from the tree of life (22.14). However, after implementing the full freedom of drawing on multiple sources to create a spectacular impression, quite unexpectedly, a strong warning is introduced at 22.18,19, not to add or subtract anything. The warning includes everyone who has been drawn into the imagistic world of the Apocalypse:

If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Henceforth the warning about adding or subtracting is to be obeyed as part of the overall message, the matters prescribed in the Apocalypse.⁶⁴

The paradoxical warning, or prohibition, need not be taken as though implying that the Apocalypse should not be read in any way possible to the comprehending reader. How else to read, except through one's own understanding, which cannot but edit, evaluate and select from everything it receives, as has been confirmed again and again?⁶⁵ The clause about not adding or subtracting can be seen as aligning the protagonist with the prophets, scribes and messengers, who must faithfully report what they have been told (Jos 1.7; Prov 30.6; Jer 26.2).⁶⁶

Most commentators note that the warning against adding and taking away comes from Deuteronomy (4.2; 12.32). In Deut 4.2 the people

⁶⁴ Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 1150–6.

⁶⁵ Ricoeur describes the personal experience of reading as narrative reflection. According to him, 'to make a plot is already to make the intelligible spring from the accidental, the universal from the singular, the necessary or probable from the episodic.' Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative* 1: 41. Bruner, in turn, observes that 'interpretation never achieves univocal understanding, and certainly does not discover *causes*. Whether it is interpretation in psychoanalysis, in the law, in literature, in history, what it requires for its success is multiple perspective.' Bruner, J. *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* xiv.

⁶⁶ See also Flavius Josephus, W. Whiston, and P. L. Maier. *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, transl. W. Whiston (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1999) 48.

are commanded to neither add nor take away anything from what God commands, but to keep the commandments of the Lord (cf. Apocalypse 14.12). So too in Deut 12.32. In the immediate preceding context of the first instance (Deut 4:2), Deuteronomy repeatedly calls Israel to obey the statutes and ordinances taught by Moses as a condition for entering and dwelling in the Promised Land (Deut 4.1; 30.15–20). The warning in the Apocalypse appears in a similar context. Furthermore, Deut 4.2 precedes the reminder that all who worshiped another god (Baal-peor) perished. One needs to recall what happens to those who worship the beast(s) in the Apocalypse (chapters 13,14,16,19,20). In the context of the second instance (Deut 12:32), Israel is warned against false prophets who would instigate Israel to worship other gods in addition to YHWH and who would, by so doing, in effect, be adding to his commandments or subtracting from them (13.1–5). The warning, then, is against the falsification of God's message by false prophets.

Curiously, the Apocalypse seems to stand in conflict with several other Christian teachers, prophets and church assemblies. They are mentioned by 'name', for example, the deeds of the Nicolaitans (2.6), those who hold the teaching of Balaam (2.14), and those who tolerate Jezebel (2.20). Conversely, they are mentioned by their misuse of titles such as claiming to be 'apostles' (2.2) or 'Jews' (2.9), or they are identified as the synagogue of Satan (3.9). The Apocalypse also makes abstractions of the adversaries such as the beast (13.5), the prostitute (17.1), Babylon (18.7) and the false prophet (16.13; 19.20). It also seems to be an exploration of boundaries between the Jewish synagogue and the Roman Empire, on the one hand, and the saints, those holding an assumed correct worldview (14.12), on the other. What takes the narratee by surprise is that, after the paraenesis to adhere and to have endurance,⁶⁷ the ethical or ideological input of the Apocalypse is remarkably scanty. The narration does not deal with what it means to be considered a 'dog' to whom the promised reward is denied. Neither does it spell out what it means to practice magic arts or to be sexually immoral. Murder is the only somewhat self-explanatory concept, whereas, especially for a modern reader idolatry begs for explanation as well as the over-generalizing everyone who loves and practices falsehood (22.15).

⁶⁷ Georg Adamsen concludes that, in the Apocalypse, paraenetic is a parousia motif and the paraenesis is directly related to the parousia and the parousian. Adamsen, G. S. "Parousia and Paraenesis: The Parousia Motif and Its Paraenetic Use in the Book of the Revelation." Ph.D. diss. (Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology, Oslo, 2002).

Considering the Apocalypse's warning alongside Deut 4.2 and 12.32, which forbid abrogating any of the laws taught by Moses or adding to them, is quite helpful. In the context of Deuteronomy, the prohibition has a specific focus. Every time it appears it is connected with warnings against adopting foreign worship practices. When viewed against its Deuteronomic background and in its own context, the prohibition in the Apocalypse falls in the same category; it does not prevent the right to read or interpret the Apocalypse, to construct meaning in the course of experiencing the artefact.⁶⁸ Just as the Deuteronomy passages cite the prohibition in order to stress the importance not to worship foreign gods, so too, the prohibition in the Apocalypse can be seen as a boundary marker in relation to the prevailing religious practices of first-century Roman society. To apply it to interpretative controls would certainly be beside the point.⁶⁹ After all, Deut 29.29 attests: 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.' This can be seen to be in line with that the Apocalypse could be viewed as a rewriting of the traditions it draws upon, not only the Deuteronomic material but also and especially the visionary images of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah and the intertestamental tradition as well as its contemporary early Christian conventions.

Although the Apocalypse supplies parameters for appropriation it meets the parameters of the real-life frame of the reader. This meeting decides how the meaning of the narrative is appropriated within those boundaries.⁷⁰ The initial reading perceives the narrative situation as a unique event, even though real-life frames and narrative tradition emerge in creating the framing. This engages the reader in an unexpected and complex dialectic. A narrative reading of the Apocalypse based on experiential narrative parameters uses resources available in the here and now of the reading experience. This includes tense shifts, deictic references and composition, awareness of how earlier events in the narrative are brought to life, consciousness that emerges through the interplay between different frames of time and layers of interactions. For example, at the level of John's narration of his immediate experience, his account is in the past tense, 'I was', 'I heard', 'I turned', 'I

⁶⁸ Royalty, R. M. "Don't Touch This Book!" 282–99.

⁶⁹ According to Royalty, the goal is to limit the right to interpret 'the word of God' to the Apocalypse alone. Royalty, R. M. "Don't Touch This Book!" 292.

⁷⁰ Eco, U. *The Role of the Reader* 63.

saw' (1.9,10,12).⁷¹ This implies that there is no direct correspondence in time and location between the act of telling and the time and location of what is told as having happened. For the reader's experience of those events, the time that has elapsed before telling is not relevant. Thus, the composition of the Apocalypse is not tied up with the recounted events. Furthermore, the reader experiences immediacy in the narrated situation, even though the narration and composition of the Apocalypse include slippages, such as John claiming to know things that he has not been told in the narrated account. He knows that a third of the living creatures in the sea have died (8.8,9). He knows that Satan was bound for 1000 years and set free thereafter (20.1–3). Yet, no one told him these things, and he does not report having been there to count the dead or being present to witness Satan's release. In the world of everyday living, the predominant mode of disclosure may seem immediate, as it were, not received through the composition of subsequent sources of earlier similar events.

Narrating in real-life does not need to rely to the same degree on a dense network of related meanings and sources of knowledge. However, endeavours involving telling, including crafted narratives and even immediate telling, are interpretations in the broad sense and to various degrees. This is pragmatically implicit in every act of communication, in the emission and reception of each mode of meaning. To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate.⁷² The subsequent narration of a possible earlier narrative transforms that text from one historical, social and communicative context to another, creating a confrontation or simply a dialogue between settings. When previous narratives are incorporated in a newer one the reader narrativization reaches a new level of complexity. Readers confront and deal with cultures and situations separated in space and time and only belonging together in the reading process.⁷³ A considerable amount of reader competence is required for meaningful assimilation of one text into another.

Ilkka Pyysiäinen observes that literacy, in forwarding religious traditions, follows basic intuitive operations. Both the intuitive and reflec-

⁷¹ Trafton, J. L. *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005) 9.

⁷² Steiner, G. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) xii.

⁷³ Pavis, P. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992) 136.

tive processing employ knowledge derived from personal experience, concrete and generic concepts, images, stereotypes and associative relations. The generalization of themes can be seen as a cognitive function of intuition, creativity, imagination, visual recognition and associative memory.⁷⁴ Thus, we can view hearing as part of our thoughts about another consciousnesses, thoughts consisting of reflections as a creative process triggered by the presentation of the artefact.⁷⁵ Real-life experience is based on the assumption that whenever one has understood something, he or she also aligns his or her actions to that insight. The blessing is for those who accept what the book presents as 'a revelation from God' (1.1).

The narrative addresses telling as a situation in which hearing means 'hearing significance', which, in turn, means translating, or re-telling, from the perspective of the narratee's own real-life frame. As for the literary frame, 1.3 and 22.18,19 touch on the bitter-sweet reality of reading the Apocalypse. John as the protagonist is offered the very scroll which he is in the process of mediating (10.1,8). He is supposed to internalize the script in a figurative manner by eating the book of disclosure. As sweet as reading turns out to be for John, what can be said about the bitterness in digesting, or figuratively, reflecting upon the revelation (10.9,10)? Through the previous action in the narration the narratee has experienced opening the seals of the book, witnessed transcendental interacting with humans, borne out the action of 'the apocalyptic riders' (6.1–8.1). After the reader has encountered the profound sensation of imagined anxiety and experienced otherness, he or she does not hope or expect to stay in that otherness. Alternatively, the reader may be absorbed by its mysteries. There is a moment of suspense for the reader at the prospect of a resolution, a silence preceding the sound of trumpets, the anticipated moment when Jesus takes over the kingdom (11.15). John is ready to embrace an appeasement but, instead, is handed out an 'open book' (10.8–10) representing possibly the 'otherness' that needs to be grasped. That John is asked to eat it resonates with the liturgical act of the real-life frame of The Word ... the Bread of life (John 1.1; 6.35). The real-life frame of concretely eating is like reading, where the reader is partaking in the otherness of Christ and his revelation.

⁷⁴ Pyysiäinen, I. "Intuition, Reflection, and the Evolution of Traditions" 292–4.

⁷⁵ As ideologies are too abstract to be useful in everyday life, popular religion deviates from written documents. Boyer, P. *Religion Explained. The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* (London: Heineman, 2001) 320–2.

Otherness is thus not a manifestation of the space outside but it refers to a new dimension and depth exemplified by the real-life frame of eating. However, throughout the narration, the Apocalypse is creating a reader experience of ambiguity coupled with marked distinctness. The idea of otherness, which needs to be grasped and is offered as an ‘open book’, both can and cannot be part of the one who swallows it. It may, in fact, be indigestible. The attempt to join the otherness can, if only temporarily within this scene, produce a paradox experience of sweetness and indigestibility.

Wolfgang Iser describes the indeterminacies in the text as gaps in understanding,⁷⁶ to be filled in by the reader.⁷⁷ Although all literary texts naturally contain indeterminacies the Apocalypse provokes the motivated reader to be engaged with a narration that promises understanding – via slow reading, rereading and exploration of sites containing promising clues. This helps the reader to form a consciousness regarding an expected possible world.⁷⁸ Iser suggests that as the reader gains an ‘interpretation’ of the text, the interpretation aids in the development of his or her ongoing self-identity.⁷⁹ As a consequence of reader-narrative dialogue, polyvocality and experientiality emerge, in which the reader’s identity becomes linked with communal identities and their interpretive traditions. Because individual responses are inseparable from interpersonal, intertextual experiences⁸⁰ the personhood of

⁷⁶ Terry Eagleton argues that Iser would not need to ‘normalize’ textual indeterminacies to the point that readers fight the text, as much as to interpret it so as to achieve a balanced entity. Eagleton, T. *Literary Theory* 71.

⁷⁷ Iser’s theory of reading may commend a critical democratic politics which, by ‘deforming’ and defamiliarizing accepted perspectives, urges constant re-examination of social and individual conventions. Iser, W. *The Act of Reading*; Iser, W. *From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Iser, W. *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Iser, W. *The Range of Interpretation*; Iser, W. “The Significance of Fictionalizing.” A lecture for the Learned Societies Luncheon, given at Irvine on February 24, 1997; van Oort, R. “The Use of Fiction in Literary and Generative Anthropology: An Interview with Wolfgang Iser.” *Anthropoetics* (1997/1998).

⁷⁸ Bateson, M.-C. *Peripheral Visions: Learning along the Way* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1994); Behar, R. *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

⁷⁹ Hamilton, C. “From Iser to Turner and Beyond: Reception Theory Meets Cognitive Criticism.” *Style* 36 (2002) 640–59.

⁸⁰ This is well reflected in Heidegger’s view of being positioned in the world. As he explains, ‘the basic way in which we are outside ourselves’ is not only ‘being de-

the narrator and of other characters assume didactic or explanatory roles,⁸¹ enhancing correlation between the individual self-identity creation and the communal meaning formation. As to how the Apocalypse establishes the narrator's personhood in the reading experience, it will be discussed in the next chapter.

terminated in our inner being for ourselves. It is above all a way of being attuned, and letting ourselves be attuned.' Heidegger, M. *Nietzsche*, vol. 1: *The Will to Power as Art*, transl. D. Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979) 99.

⁸¹ Fludernik underlines that since cultural and contextual frames determine forms of natural storytelling, narratives are seen as the experientiality that 'correlates with the evocation of consciousness or with the representation of a speaker role. Experientiality, as everything else in narrative reflects a cognitive schema of embodiedness ... and the fundamental story parameters of personhood.' Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 12.

CHAPTER FIVE

NARRATOR PERSPECTIVES – AFFIRMING NARRATION

Man cannot speak his thought without thinking his speech.¹

This chapter looks at multiple narrating voices, specifically the narrator pair: the narrating I and the co-narrator. As this reading of the Apocalypse shows, the narrative presents itself through either contradiction or the pairing of opposites, a feature deeply embedded in its narrative strategy. This applies not only to the characters populating the imagistic domains and to characters as protagonists but also to the characters assuming and alternating a narrating role. A reader rooted in dialectics and the Aristotelian rule of noncontradiction, who is taught to resolve contradiction not through suspension and multiplicity but rather through a judgment that favours either one proposition or the other,² would have to resolve the felt unease by means of a conclusive guide. In the reading of the Apocalypse as authoritative biblical text, attempts to resolve the tension according to Aristotelian logic are common. However, this chapter shows that a reading advocating experience is sensitive to multiple narrating voices and to the effect of their alternation in recounting the events. The possible diverse narrativizations indicate the polyvocality of the text. The question then evolves around the quality of experience for the reader of a narrative that has a way of maintaining the truth in one proposition and equally and simultaneously in its apparent opposite.³

The narratological categories of characters in narratives representing acting and experiencing persons connect with the cognitive concept of personhood, as Fludernik argues.⁴ Thus, personhood is what defines characters as persons. For a narrative experience, it is of little

¹ de Bonald, L. G. A. "L'homme pense sa parole avant de parler sa pensée." C. O. Blum, ed. *Critics of the Enlightenment: Readings in the French Counter-revolutionary Tradition*, transl. and ed. C. O. Blom (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute Books, 2004).

² Aristotle. *Metaphysics* IV 3 1005 b 19–20.

³ Brown, C. *Contrary Things: Exegesis, Dialectic, and the Poetics of Didacticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) 3, 36–62.

⁴ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 249.

relevance to attribute personhood to an author, but, for the narrative to become alive, personhood for the narrating voice is crucial. Likewise the narrative exists in the process of creating a narrative protagonist. By engaging the reader, the narrative lets him or her affirm the personhood of the one who does the narrating. The reading/listening experience ascribes narrator personhood by evoking visualization of real-life human beings as actors. Personhood of any of the narrative's characters is a fundamental presupposition about the real world.⁵ In effect, experienced personhood allows to balance the mental dislocation when the eternal and the temporal are merged. In the same way, attributes of personhood are present when identity is blurred by alterity – whether human or otherworldly.

The visualization of the Apocalypse necessarily builds on personhood as crucial to the experientiality that derives from the existence of a human subject. Similarly, voice is ascribed to the personhood of the characters, including the narrator, who is also a protagonist as well as an invisible narrator. Visualization and voice are clues to the ability to act, and thus add perspective and depth to personhood.⁶ This enables the crucial application of real-life frames. Moreover, this creates the premise for the narration to (strategically) use and expand on deictic options and, eventually, to build on the relation to the mystic and sublime.

According to Monika Fludernik, what the reader looks for is an existential continuity.⁷ This is felt between narrative-internal communication levels as well as between narrator-narratee levels. This chapter sets out to examine the multiple-level narrator of the Apocalypse and how the reader/hearer experiences co-narration.

⁵ 'The anthropomorphic bias of narratives and its correlation with the fundamental story parameters of personhood, identity, actionality, etc. have long been noted by theoreticians of narrative and have been recognized as constituting the rock bottom level of story matter.' Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 12.

⁶ Herman, D. *Story Logic* 329–30.

⁷ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 245–9.

5.1 THE NARRATOR AS THE EXPERIENCER

I, John, your brother (1.9)

Narrator John's personhood is first affirmed as he identifies himself with the community of those who are loved, freed and belong to a priestly order established by the 'one' (1.4–6). John's identity is established through companionship (1.9),⁸ and the narratees he addresses are his brothers. John's assimilation with the community and brotherhood takes place in terms of the cheerful (or hopeful) endurance (1.9; cf. 2.2) that he shares with his companions.

The reader encounters John as the narrating character who tells vividly of his experience with an angelic figure by reeling the first-person voice of his conversational partner. Thus, the reporting of the situation as it happens evokes a realistic frame of existence as an exchange between subjects. What John tells gives perspective to his personhood. The textual strategy, both text-internally and externally, is to insert into his own narrator voice the direct speech of his conversational partner.

However, what he says is addressed directly to the second-person singular 'you' as in a letter format. David Herman argues that narratives constrain readers, viewers and listeners into taking up a perspective according to which to model the representation of the world that is experienced.⁹ In the context when John is introduced to the reader, he is presented in the perspective of addressing the seven assemblies with 'Grace to you' (1.4). This letter format, an embedded internal narrative, functions as contextual anchoring having bearing on the following time when the assemblies are addressed with 'I know this of you' (2.2). Thus, readers can feel as being spoken to by John, as the words come through him and as this would correspond to what they are accustomed to from the apostolic epistles. In addition, based on the text-internal frame, the words addressed to 'you' can plausibly be attributed to John by mainly relating to the 'companionship' he indicates when he first introduces himself as a telling subject: 'I, John, your brother' (1.9). All associations mentioned above make it easy for the narratee to attribute personhood to the narrator. Furthermore, the deictic expression 'you' reduces the distance between the narrator and text-external reader, as narratee. When John reports about the message addressed to the angel of an as-

⁸ John is the *συγκοινωνός*, 'companion' (1.9).

⁹ Herman, D., ed. *Narratologies* 218–46.

sembly it is through the first-person singular 'I'. The experientiality of the 'I' alternates between the narrating voice coming from 'the one' and the narrating voice of the 'I', John, a brother with close ties to his audience. As the narrating unfolds, another aspect of the companionship is exposed: a potential insecurity, 'fear' of an upcoming experience (1.17). In John's case, an immediate threatening experience is unfounded as he is in the presence of the 'one' (1.17), and in the case of the angels (messengers) of the particular assemblies (churches) because of the comforting promises of reward by the same 'one' who is in control (1.20; also 2.7,11,17,26–28; 3.4,5,12,21).

Establishing companionship between John and the assemblies is relevant for two reasons: on the one hand, John, as 'your brother', can appropriate to himself the message directed to the assemblies, on the other hand, since what is said about the 'you', the brothers, applies to the 'I', a connectedness to the reader is equally experienced. The 'I' that tells about, and to the 'you' operates on several parallel audience/reader experiences: Jesus addressing the angels of the assemblies, the vision addressing its receiver, John 'reporting' to the churches, and the Apocalypse speaking to the 'you' as its external audience/reader. Yet, regarding the narrator's personhood, what is in fact made known to the audience/readers about John as a teller and about his commissioner, the initiating narrator? At the outset of the narrative, a third-person, an all-knowing narrator, points out that John narrates in accordance to 'whatever he saw', in other words, as 'he [John] saw' his experience (1.2). The unidentified narrating voice gives him his role of telling while John defines his personhood by adhering to companionship between himself and the brothers. John's narrating is again set apart from the commissioner's voice, since when John turns to see the voice (1.12), it is not the one he heard first (4.1). He becomes the 'I' addressing the 'you' and the 'you', 'your brother', being addressed by the 'I'.

The messenger is a personification at the level of human character and motivation. John's construct of personhood includes the saints,¹⁰ the holy ones,¹¹ the brothers¹² or the servants¹³ like the prophets,¹⁴ and

¹⁰ ἁγίων (5.8; 8.3,4; 11.18; 13.7,10; 14.12; 16.6; 17.6; 18.20,24; 19.8; 20.9).

¹¹ ἅγιος (3.7; 6.10; 20.6; 22.11).

¹² ἀδελφὸς (1.9; 12.10; 19.10; 22.9).

¹³ Σύνδουλός (6.11; 19.10; 22.9).

¹⁴ προφητῶν (16.6; 18.24; 22.6,9).

the keepers.¹⁵ The messenger summarizes John's personhood with these same attributes when he attests to the companionship¹⁶ with John:

I am a fellow bondservant with you and with your brothers, the prophets, and the keepers of the words of this book (22.9).

The reader experiences this description to include John, since all those mentioned belong to the same kingdom (1.6). However, the coming into being of the personhood of those described emerges from an individualistic frame. Namely, in the Apocalypse, the reader/narratee does not encounter any ecclesiastical or institutional markers (Christian, bishop, deacon, elder, widow, body of Christ, sons of God).¹⁷ Rather the narrative presents unmediated personhood that is observed as having a will and desire, as exemplified by what is known of the 'you' (singular) addressed in the assemblies. Furthermore, the listener experiences the distress of being him or herself exposed to the search by the 'I am he who searches the minds and hearts' (2.23) and by the pledge that every heart and mind is individually considered. Thus, in the narrative the experiences are very personal, they happen directly to the 'you' who feels addressed; as such, this is a redefinition of personhood, which is not awarded through any institution.

Experiencing with John an exposure of one's heart and motivation in the epistolary part of the Apocalypse leads an individual to inductively appropriate a common human experience of personhood that advances the choice of influencing events through the repentance called for. An example of such an experience is the way John responds to the advice of Jesus, which is an exposure that may touch the narratee's perspective. Although the narratee may experience a certain distance from the collectively rebuked 'you' the situation prompts a reassessment of the narratee's view of life in general. This reconsideration leads to a variety of responses, from a sense of vulnerability to a sense of earnestness and enrichment, and possibly to the hoped-for repentance: You say, 'I am rich; I became rich and I need nothing.' But you did not know that you were wretched, pitiful, weak, blind and naked. I counselled you to buy gold ... so you became rich ... (3.17,18). So, you are earnest, and repented! (3.19).

¹⁵ Τηρουντων (1.3; 2.26; 3.8,10; 12.17; 14.12; 16.15; 22.7,9).

¹⁶ συγκαινωνος, 1.9. Cf. 18.4.

¹⁷ Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John* 183–5.

But it is not an easy recognition. The reader experiences the tension between rebuke and challenge: on the one hand, the desire to be earnest, and, on the other hand, the awareness of having one's innermost exposed to the uttermost, exemplified in tolerating a woman named Jezebel (2.20), a metonym for idolatry, i.e. spiritual adultery.¹⁸ Babylon being described as a promiscuous queen in the Apocalypse would naturally call to mind King Ahab's wife Jezebel.¹⁹ Just as the reader is rebuked for tolerating the promiscuous woman, he or she is advised not to share companionship²⁰ with Babylon (18.4). As for John, privileged to receive so much information about the shortcomings of the various church-assemblies and serving as their surrogate informer, he describes the fallen city like an insider who would know the emotions of the kings (18.9) and the mindset of the merchants who wonder where they shall continue to sell their cargoes (18.11). It is as if he would partake with 'every shipmaster, and everyone who sails anywhere, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea' (18.17) remembering Babylon's past greatness. The reader detects a nostalgic tone in John's narrating Babylon's remembrance, a companionship from which he – like his brothers – has to depart. However, the distressed merchants and kings are indeed set at a distance in the narrative which tells the reader that those who have been part of Babylon experience its otherness described in the repeated lament: 'O city of strength, in one moment she was laid waste!' (18.10,17,19). The reader experiences sharing the rebuke for being part of Babylon and the challenge to depart from everything it represents (18.4). John's privileged insider's view is equally discernible in his description of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which stands to complete 'a tale of two cities' (21.1–10). Introduced at 3.12 as the opposite of the city 'where Satan lives' (2.13), it remains, to the very end of the Apocalypse, in sharp contrast to its spiritual opposite. Thus, the audience/reader is, together with the narrator, posed to wonder what is the essential difference between the two descending cities (18.21 and 21.10). In the presentation, that similarity is deceptive. Any epistemology the narrative might be out to present could potentially turn out not to be the answer needed for a satisfying vision of the universe and our place in it. The earnest delineations of how to relate to conflicting

¹⁸ Dutcher-Walls, P. *Jezebel. Portraits of a Queen* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004) 75.

¹⁹ Duff, P. *Who Rides the Beast?* 89–96.

²⁰ συγκαινωνήσητε, 18.4. Cf. 1.9.

claims of adherence is part of John's narration.

John's own personhood is reflected at best in his affinity with the audience, presenting himself as their 'brother' (αδελφος, 1.9), a member of their brotherhood, and thus a 'co-servant' (σύνδουλος, 6.11) who shares their afflictions and hopeful endurance: How long... until you judge the living of the land and revenge 'our' blood from them (6.10)?

5.2 CO-NARRATOR

As the experiencing and narrating character, John creates the impression that the events are taking place in real-time before the narratee's eyes. Yet, a co-narrating voice interferes in John's narration bringing in commentaries, narratives asides, footnotes as it were, inserted into the real-time narrative account. The main narrating voice, John, consists mainly of mimetic parts. Mimesis is the telling of the action that is being dramatized as it unfolds. The mimetic parts narrate in a scenic way, in specified settings or situations, making use of dialogue and containing direct speech. In contrast, the co-narrator covers longer spans of time and interferes with background comments. This is the diegetic voice. Mimetic and diegetic voices can be distinguished in their function by how they guide the reader temporally and spatially. The mimetic part of narration follows the pace of the happenings, thus it is a more detailed, slow, real-time telling in which what is done and said is staged 'in front of the eyes' of the reader, providing the impression of being present, seeing and hearing things.²¹ Conversely, the co-narrating voice constitutes the diegetic element²² of the Apocalypse, the parts of the narrative alternating with the real-time action in giving essential linking information, providing background or overall references. The narrating voice or the diegetic part assumes an overarching perspective. Generally, this is done not by using dialogue, illustration

²¹ The mimesis-diegesis distinction comes from Plato. Abbott, P. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* 189.

²² The diegetic parts of the narrative are presented in a rapid, panoramic or summarizing way. They give linking information without creating the impression that the events are taking place before our eyes. The diegetic space includes events that are presumed to have occurred, as well as actions not presented in the staged manner to the reader shaping an extended narrative experience. Barry, P. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 231; Prince, G. *A Dictionary of Narratology* 20, 52.

or direct speech but in a stylized paraphrased manner taking the reader backwards and forwards in time and space, filling in the reader with – sometimes abstract and distant – clues on the action.²³

The reader, or narratee, depends on the diegetic elements, the narrative asides, for meaning-making of the narration. The asides in the Apocalypse, which are provided by the co-narrator voice, comprise about ten percent of the full narration.²⁴ The co-narrator's nameless explanatory intersections balance out the subjective flavour of John's experiential narrating. The co-narrator's voice brings to the narrative a second thought, a confirmation, as it were, that John's narrating is sustainable. In practice, this means that the co-narrator affirms the narration from another angle, answering the criteria of clarity, through claims of identity of characters, identifiable objects or actions.

An example of the dynamics between narrator and co-narrator is 12.1–13.18. Here John's dramatization of the raging of the dragon and the triumph of the beast is interrupted by remarks of the co-narrating voice. Narrator John describes in vivid terms how a dragon sweeps a third of the stars out of heaven and flings them upon the land (τῆς γῆς). After having himself been thrown to the land, the dragon pursues a woman who is giving birth to a child. When the woman is given wings to escape the dragon spews a river out of its mouth to drown her. Yet, the land that cracks open to swallow the river helps her. As the dragon becomes more and more enraged it sets off to make war against the woman's offspring. Then the dragon and a powerful beast described in grotesque detail make war against the saints, conquer them and subdue every nation. All, except for those whose name is in the scroll of life since the foundation of the world, worship the beast. It is in the midst of the hectic visualization that the co-narrator voice intervenes with a reflecting pause, leading to interpretative observations as an alternative awareness.

He who has an ear let him hear.
 If anyone is to go into captivity,
 into captivity he will go.
 If anyone is to be killed with the sword,
 with the sword he will be killed.

²³ Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse* 162–4; Fludernik, M. *The Fictions of Language* 27–30.

²⁴ Lee, D. *The Narrative Asides* 142.

Here is the patience and faith of the holy ones. (13.9,10)

The feature of providing clarifications is added by the co-narrating voice, since it is not part of the intensive visualizations and dramatic presentations by the narrating and experiencing character John. In concluding the co-narrator shares vital information giving a different understanding of the experience.

Here is the wisdom: He who understands figures out the number of the beast, for it is a number of a man and the number of it is six hundred and sixty six. (13.18)

Other examples of the type of insights that such clarifying, generalizing remarks suggest to the reader/narratee are:

During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. (9.6)

These are those whose virginity was not defiled with women, for they are the ones that follow the Lamb wherever he goes, the ones purchased from among people and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. (14.4,5)

Here is the patience of the holy, who obey God's commandments and have the faith of Jesus. (14.12)

This calls for wisdom... (17.9–14)

Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear – fine linen stands for the righteous deeds of the saints. (19.8)

The witness of Jesus stands for the spirit of prophecy (19.10).

Fortunate and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (20.6–10)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death. (21.8)

Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; let him who is holy continue to be holy. (22.11)

Similarly, to John the narrator who is accompanied by the ever-present messenger, the co-narrator exists alongside the narratee. However, the co-narration goes beyond a commentary to orientate the narratee. Explaining names, places, relational belonging, clarifying conduct and context, and decoding enigmas are only part of how the co-narrator accompanies the narratee. He or she experiences an assumed personhood of the co-narrator that is gradually sustained and strengthened by the repeated reappearance. Thus, the co-narrator's voice opens the path to a possible joint understanding of a mystic world of secrets and, implicitly, entitles him to evaluate the narrative action, the thoughts and feelings the characters expose. Co-narrating as a voice turns the narratee's consciousness towards the 'otherness' in the narrative-world of the Apocalypse. In the co-narrator readers and listeners as narratees can find an arguing voice that supplies them with the means necessary for constructing an informed opinion of the dramatizations presented by John. The co-narrator's input is spaced and formed to give readers time to redirect their experiences from the sheer magnitude of John's description of the diabolic to the sublime – towards possibly readjusted experiences.

At times, the co-narrator's interjections seem startling, and this is a major feature of the style of the argumentation in the Apocalypse as a whole. Occasionally, the reader's sense-making process is stalled by the voice of co-narration. One particular example is the response in 6.9–11 when readers are told how the slaughtered ones continuously petition: 'How long – the Lord the Holy and True – until you judge the living of the land and revenge our blood on them?' Readers together with the internal narratees expect an answer, yet, in response to the question, each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been, was completed (6.9–11). The question asked is not answered fully.

Another example of co-narration is what follows the introduction to the two witnesses (11.4–11). The co-narrator fills in by identifying them, stating their authority, listing the hardships they suffer after their appointment. The inserted mention that their bodies will be lying in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt,

where also the Lord was crucified, calls to mind both Jonah and the crucifixion. For three and a half days, men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their corpses and refuse them to be put in a tomb. The inhabitants of the land having gloated over them, will celebrate by sending each other gifts because these two prophets had tormented the inhabitants of the land (11.8–10). The two witnesses have a role similar to Jonah's invoking the inhabitants of Nineveh to change their conduct. It seems to torment the evildoers. The co-narrator's repetitive fashion of focusing on the inhabitants' evilness may win the reader to condemn their wrongs and to find their perishing justifiable. The visual impact and the attention associated with the evil described have an importance extending beyond the things seen. It is no surprise, then, that attention is drawn to the reasons for the visualization by the call of the loud voice from heaven saying to them, Come up here! They went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. At that very moment there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven (11.12,13). These lines bring to mind the killing of Jesus when the earth shook giving reason to think that truly Jesus was the Son of God. The co-narrating voice painstakingly gives hints of wickedness that can justify the destruction, by calling to mind Egypt, Sodom, the crucifixion, all demonstrating the doings of evil. The reader is pulled in the realm of the sources of appalling conduct, and while focussing on the evil the narratee hears a call to wake up. There is justification in rising to wage war against the evil ones. Coincidentally, seven thousand are found dead in this very scene, which would suggest the stern consequences of the tendency to neglect forgotten evils. As such, the co-narrating insertion into the narrative of John's visionary experience creates a critical picture of the world and calls readers to cautious judgment introduced by the co-narrator:

Fortunate are those who wash their robes that they will have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who love and practices falsehood. (22.14)

Fortunate is he who stays awake and watches his garments, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed. (16.15)

Fortunate are the dead who die in the Lord now – Yes, says the Spirit – they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them. (14.13)

It is worth noting that the final word in the Apocalypse is given to the voice of the co-narrator: He who attests to these things says: Yes, I am coming suddenly. Amen, come Lord Jesus. But the grace of the Lord Jesus be with all (22.20,21). The co-narrator's afterthought includes 'all' in the grace of the Lord Jesus. In the absence of textual markers as to who these 'all' are, the reader/narratee tends to tune in on narrator John's seemingly ambivalent relation to his world. A marked personhood, based on identification with the ones being holy, distinct and apart from 'those' of evil conduct, remains unsettled. In the narrative, there is hardly an untroubled distinction from those who pierced him (1.7), who claim to be apostles (2.2), who say they are Jews (2.9), who say to the mountains fall on us (6.16), who do not have the seal of God (9.4), who seek death but will not find it (9.6), who follow the Beast (13.3), who give their power and authority to the Beast (17.17), who are cowards, unbelieving, vile, murderers, immoral, magicians, idolaters and liars (21.8), who do wrong (22.10). The co-narrator closes the narrative, yet no existential cure is provided; rather it is seen as the experience of all seeking meaning in the puzzling order of life. In this, the co-narrator cautiously extends the Lord Jesus' grace to *all*.

5.3 ALTERNATING BETWEEN NARRATOR AND CO-NARRATOR

In the Apocalypse, the narrating 'I' – John – reports his experiences in which he has a central role. At the same time, he is a witness to other characters in the story. A co-narrating voice assists by inserting contrasting arguments and by providing additional information. Through this interplay, the reader detects a construction of sliding views between narrative internal and narrative external perspectives, which include switching between characters as text-internal narratees and the reader/listeners as external narratees.²⁵ The characteristic tone of each narrator leads to a distinct reader experience. The voices either sustain real-life linkages or redirect to the narrative positioning, while a creative mind acts as orchestrator between these elements.

²⁵ This observation poses a strain on the theories of Stanzel and Genette who assert that texts do not bend easily to this categorization. Bal, M. "Notes on Narrative Embedding." *Poetics Today* 2 (1981) 2, 41–59.

On the strength of each other's presence, the two main narrating voices of the Apocalypse succeed in intensifying the meaning creation. The two narrators merge into an elaborated sequential argumentation; it is the two voices combined that make up the narrative agent that orientates the experience of the narratees. The timing for the changes of focus seems calculated, and each instance seems necessary to give support to the experience of the reader/narratee and to sustain an alternating narrator-narratee relationship. The significance of the interplay between narrator and co-narrator rests in jointly applying illuminating shifts in perspectives. These shifting perspectives affect the course of the reader's experience, for they allow openness and access to the 'otherness' of meaning. For example, in instances when the co-narrator ends in a negative tone in view of the ensuing calamity the narrator, John, steps in with a changed point of view, towards a desired resolution. This affects the experience that follows: the reader perceives that the agent dramatizes a scenic reassurance of a possible unresolved situation. The following are examples of how the interplay could enhance the consciousness of the reader:

After the narrated instance of the two olive trees, the co-narrator warns about still another woe (11.14). Yet, John describes how God has taken over bringing judgement to the wicked and reward to the saints (11.15–8).

After the dragon war, the co-narrator warns that Satan is thrown to the land (12.10); John proclaims that salvation has taken place and the power lies in the Kingdom of God.

After the violent beast take-over, the co-narrator's explanation is cryptic in that it does nothing else except identifies the beast (14.1). John then experiences a majestic celebration of the redeemed in the presence of God, and describes the occasion with music and song.

After the co-narrator's acknowledgement of the devastation of the rule of Babylon, including its brutal murders (18.24), John is with a great crowd in heaven singing praise and glory to God.

After the co-narrator's dark statement about the circumstances of Satan, the Beast and the false prophet (20.10), John describes a contrasting scene with God's throne and the new heavens and earth where everything belonging to the old order is wiped away.

Another example is the co-narrator's comment about Babylon's attitude before her fall, which reads (18.7):

In her heart she says,
 'I sit as a queen;
 I am not a widow,
 I will not see grief.

Throughout these examples, one wonders about the extent to which the assumed author (who also functions as the main narrator) employs the co-narrator voice to articulate his own assessment of what he perceives or experiences, told in an embedded narrative. The text features several embedded stories, which infiltrate the main story line, and several narrating voices are heard, sometimes simultaneous and/or cacophonous. Embedded stories are, at times, the story of John who is subjected to an ecstatic encounter. Sometimes they are inserts, like the depiction of angels coming out of heaven declaring verdicts and the fall of Babylon, and describing the reactions of kings and merchants, while the story itself is telling about Babylon as the once successful city. At the level of the main storyline, internal perspectives can become external within the embedded secondary and sometimes tertiary narrative. As a result, it is hard to decide on the identity of who in fact 'sees' or to distinguish who 'says' what. Accordingly, the relationship between the narrating voices and what is narrated is distanced. The clearest voices are those that take shape either as expository statements by the co-narrator of what the narrative deals with, or as spontaneous accounts of an authentic experience of being in the spirit. In the Apocalypse, this combination has the expected characteristic of attributing the author's voice to the more authoritative 'others' so as to validate it – to make it more believable.²⁶ Since the narrative make up of the Apocalypse consists in shifts between information provided through a separate objective narrator and the subjective voice of the experiencing narrator John,²⁷ the reader as narratee assumes an active, participating role in the orientating mind (nous) that is bridging the two.

The I-narrator has direct access to the narrating character's world

²⁶ Sternberg, M. *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978); Sternberg, M. "Point of View and the Indirections of Direct Speech." *Language and Style* 15 (1982) 68; Sternberg, M. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*.

²⁷ Herman, L. and B. Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* 70–9.

and experience. A third-person narration tells the tale from an all-knowing perspective, dividing the story into private thoughts, narrating secret or hidden events, jumping between spaces and times. Yet, the experiencing I-narrator, or the omniscient co-narrating voice, makes choices on how much the reader is told and at what stage. The reader, or viewer, has an experience. This happens through an accumulating exposure to what is shown and told as relevant in the narration and is understood as relevant by the reader/narratee. What the story tells is not everything, even if what happens is retold as a lengthy account or as a personal experience. Whether in third-person all-knowing mode or in first-person direct experience mode, with re-enforcements and constructing moments of greatest effect, an account is never without gaps. Some gaps are filled by narrative rearrangements in the reader/narratee's mind. This is in line with a narratological view that argues for dissolving the traditional dualistic understanding of assumed objectivity in third-person narrations and of assumed subjectivity in first-person narrations. Thus, from the start of the Apocalypse the reader/listener/viewer engages in a narrative experience from a selected character's view, not a direct real time enactment of a specific event. However, the manner in which third-person and first-person narration, or combinations of them, are constructed or perceived and cannot be easily determined.²⁸ The significant role of the process of reading could thus be illustrated as a bridging consciousness.

The key is the reader's experience, not the author's agenda. Thus, from the reader perspective, an attempt to discover ideology, ethics, or pursued message of the alternating narrators' construction fades in the background. This is in contrast to the earlier argumentation by Booth of an elusive function assumed by a governing consciousness discernable in a story.²⁹ According to Seymour Chatman, such a guiding consciousness has then been re-interpreted as implied author, the source of the constituent choices and values in the text.³⁰ While Wayne Booth

²⁸ Jahn, M. "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives" 441–68; Herman, L. and B. Vervaeck. *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* 164.

²⁹ Booth, W. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) 71–5.

³⁰ The implied author is mainly of psychological significance. Chatman, S. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) 151. As film narratology offers a similar model to the reader perspective by focussing on the viewer rather than the director as the enunciator of the narrative, the

speaks for a projected self-image and an ideally literary created version of the person, Seymour Chatman identifies the implied author with the text itself and its successive readings through time.

The diegetic elements of the narrative create a world that includes objects, events, spaces and the characters inhabiting them. It includes things, actions and attitudes that may not explicitly be present in the artefact but are inferred by the narratees.³¹ It is as if the reader/narratee is in dialogue with the world he or she experiences via the diegetic narration, alternating with the narrator and participating in the story's unfolding in some capacity.³² Thus, the narrative's transactional situation makes room for a narrator, who is unaccounted for and mainly a narrative scheme, a covert voice, a creative mind, hardly noticeable, yet pointing out matters of audience interest and shaping consciousness in the narrative experience. The distinctive style of the co-narrator appears to be the logical counterpart of John's; it contrasts with John, the narrator/experiencer. Thus, the co-narrator interweaves myth and argument into the experience of reading/listening. As John elaborates

director's role has been considered to constitute a critical construct. Branigan, E. *Point of View in the Cinema: A Theory of Narration and Subjectivity in Classical Film* (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 1984) 71; Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse Revisited* 135–54; Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction* 86–9; Stam, R., R. Burgoyne, and S. Flitterman-Lewis. *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-structuralism, and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 1992) 190.

³¹ The recipient constructs a diegetic world from the material presented in the narrative. However, some narratives seem to make it difficult to construct a coherent diegetic world. Foucault and Benjamin question the narrative tendency to order reality, whereas Bakhtin, with the concept of the *chronotope*, invites us to understand the way narrative manipulates its time-space continuum, its diegetic world, in order to open up a variety of ways in which the relation of people to their world may be understood. Bakhtin calls these concrete possibilities that take the expression of literary genres, living impulses and form-shaping ideologies. Bakhtin, M. *The Dialogic Imagination* 85. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, commenting on Bakhtin's understanding of the chronotope, note that, according to Bakhtin, literary genres do not simply 'transcribe' onto artistic form discovered elsewhere; they themselves make discoveries. Morson, G. S. and C. Emerson. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) 366. The Apocalypse as a specific cronotope is a way of understanding experience and a form-shaping ideology to comprehend the nature of events and actions.

³² With regard to presence in the narrative, Genette distinguishes between the narrator who never appears as a character, telling stories from which he or she is absent, and between the narrator who is subject to degrees of presence in the *diegetic* world. Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse* 244–5.

descriptions of the evil in horrific painful visualizations, the co-narrator establishes the core of observations in brief pointed terms. Through this double exposure, experience and its emerging idea and personalized meaning are captured in the reader's consciousness.

The orientating creative mind, the bridging consciousness – reminder of an 'external' narrative voice – allows access to a range of narrative ploys. In the case of the Apocalypse, the experience seems to include a specific, though invisible, consciousness shaping the narrative.³³ Chapter Seven elaborates on the significance of such a binding power, which may not be instantly apparent, yet it binds the narrative experience together with the creation of apocalypticity. The Apocalypse reveals the presence of an (individual or collective) 'editorial' intelligence that selects certain stretches of time for full-scale treatment, pares off others down a little, presents still others in a highly compressed fashion, and simply scissors out some events. The impression of unrestricted narrative knowledge is created in a number of ways: cutaways to action nearby, crosscutting diverse narrations, following characters from one locale to another. The invisible glue, regardless of the presence or absence of an overarching narration or explicit genre, gives the events extracted from an array of biblical and religious tradition a sense of beginning and ending, orientation and sense of direction.

Similarly, narrative situations fall within what is argued to be a wider category of secondary narratives, which comprises every instance of temporal aside. These narratives fulfil a prominent function in the narration of the Apocalypse.³⁴ What is particularly difficult for some traditional theorists to come to terms with is the idea of secondary narrative asides exhibiting an invisible narrating agent, who subjects the events to external narratorial control.³⁵ In spite of protagonist John's prominent role, the Apocalypse, at its narrative outset in 1.1, is introduced by a narrating voice that is not a character but, in a way, hovers above the story and apparently knows its course. This narrator, though invisible, is manifest in the background. As a narrating voice, it causes confusion

³³ Andreas Markantōnatos forms a link between the idea of the author as a production supervisor and the guiding *nous* of the author of the Greek tragedy, the invisible consciousness that shapes the narrative. Markantōnatos, A. *Tragic Narrative* 7.

³⁴ Lee, D. *The Narrative Asides*.

³⁵ Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse Revisited* 41–3, 135ff; Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction* 87–95.

as to how it should be located.³⁶ The reading/hearing/viewing experience of the Apocalypse thus constitutes the bridging consciousness between events in at least two modes: as telling – verbal representations of events, showing – the direct presentation of speech together with possible music and other apparent liturgical features.³⁷

Quite differently, narrators in an epic text reproduce the speech of each of the characters, who, in turn, insert mimetic elements into the telling. In this case, the narrator is obvious to the reader, since the presence is referred to explicitly. The Gospels are predominantly narrated in this ‘epic’ manner and create an impression of objectivity. In the Apocalypse, in the co-narrating voice, there is a trait of this so-called objective characteristic. It is this co-narrator with John, the experiencing narrator, who tells the assemblies what will happen. He has the role to address them depending on how he has understood the Lamb, angels, beasts and the Dragon. The specifics are assuredly reported according to his perception (1.2). In a compiled report format, such a narrator is discursively and narratively given the role to (re-)order the chronological events of the story as he saw it.³⁸ In other words, within the frame of an account of visions the narrating John revises them.

The character John, for example, is introduced by the initial narrating voice as the recipient of the divine Word, yet his epistemology is pneumatic, not kinaesthetic (1.10; 4.2; 17.3; 21.10); it is not mediated as a physical experience through sensors. The narrated character John says in the first-person singular of the narrating-I that he hears a voice while in a rapture of the spirit. This marks how the narratee experiences the celestial voices and includes the option of an ambivalent source of the identity of God’s voice. Interestingly, the voice of God remains unspecified, although it is clearly experienced, and in several ways. At different occasions, the voice comes from behind, out of heaven, from among the four living creatures, from the four horns of the altar, the shrine, the altar, the throne. All of these, as well as the other celestial voices

³⁶ de Jong, I., R. Nünlist, and A. Bowie, eds. *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives* presents the formal devices ancient texts employ to enchant or persuade their audiences.

³⁷ Koester, C. R. *Revelation and the End of All Things* 31–40. Vanni, U. “Liturgical Dialogue as a Literary Form in the Book of Revelation.” *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991) 348–72.

³⁸ Lee finds, in the Apocalypse, 56 narrative asides, as he calls them. Lee, D. *The Narrative Asides* 91–118.

collectively, including the voice of Jesus, speak through the rendering of the narrator John. Thus, the function of the narrator is complex and alters the typical relationship of the narrator with the characters and the narratees. In the narrative, the voice of God, most of the other celestial voices and earth-based voices are experienced as independent characters. The individual voices give the impression of independent characters in as much as the voice(s) or the narrator who tells their story triggers that experience and insight in the reader, yet they are dependent on the voice who tells the narrative.

Being acts of speech, written or oral, all narrated reports create a narrated world which represents thoughts and feelings through diction; sentence construction and grammar also play a role. A single word is often all that is needed to convey an impression; regardless of the content of the speech, the choice of words can reflect the correctness, situatedness and placement of the characters. Likewise there can be special narratological reasons for abruptness. As an extra feature, the Apocalypse, in opposition to other biblical narratives, includes external parameters such as a potential musical score to accompany the performance.³⁹ Experiencing the narrated world, in which the narrated voices can be understood to address specific communities, includes an ideological 'value-effect' obtained from the narrative.⁴⁰ Similarly, the narrative as an artefact can be seen as an answer to questions asked by the experiencing communities in their respective situations.

Thus, the strange, and the ungraspable and seeming discrepancies, when accounted to a creative mind focussing on experience, cease to render reading incomprehensible. When reading the Apocalypse, one cannot help but discern a reflective deliberate mind at work in the narrative. The 'illogical' syntax, temporal inconsistency, logical oddities, contradictions and solecisms⁴¹ – all features for which the Apocalypse has been regarded as a mixture of traditions or as a clumsy composi-

³⁹ Even though the present study focuses on the textual aspect of the Apocalypse, the authorial power may also dictate everything that has to do with the employment of expressive techniques. Koester, C. *Revelation and the End of All Things* 31–8.

⁴⁰ According to Jouve, texts are capable of creating, controlling or even imposing a value-effect, as the reader identifies with characters or actions. Jouve, V. *Poétique des valeurs* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2001) 143–8.

⁴¹ 'Dissonance' is one of the ways the Apocalypse seeks to focus the readers' attention. Solecisms, Semitisms and Septuagintisms are found in 1.4,5,10,11,12,15; 2.13,20; 3.12; 4.1; 5.6,12; 7.4,8,9; 8.9; 9.14; 10.2,8; 11.4,15; 12.5,7; 14.7,19; 19.6,20; 20.2. Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 101.

tion⁴² – can be perceived as part of a medium to construct a reader experience. As a whole, the initial stumbling experienced by the narratee is but a step into a world of a creative mind with the co-narrator as a brainchild to guide through an imagistic, visually contrasted, and reshuffled order.

⁴² See n. 7 on page 134 of this book.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NARRATEE'S EXPERIENCE – CONNECTEDNESS OF LIFE

Interpretation of reality is based upon a quite unique position.

Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed.¹

Building on the analysis of narrative positioning in Chapter Four and on narrator perspectives in Chapter Five this chapter focuses on the narratee's experience from two angles: the connection between the experience and narratological schemata such as indirect exposure to the told events or deictic expressions, and the relation to otherness. Since the role of the reader as narratee is central to a cognitive narratological approach, I will elaborate in this chapter on the sense of otherness, experienced by the reader, as well as on the concept of connectedness, created by the very same narrative. These are the two relevant aspects for the understanding of my argument about the seamless movement, back and forth, between two participatory locations, the internal and external experience of the narratee.

Reader/Narratee Experience. Much of the discussion about how readers construct what they read, including various theories of possible worlds, hinges on what position readers take as members of their temporal and cultural community. What I want to emphasize here is not the immediate historical context of the reader/narratee but rather, with respect to the reading experience, how his or her situatedness reflects the mental attitude to reality and to the nature of existence.² For example, the understanding of heaven and earth, the idea and explanation of time, the demarcation between the secular and religious are notions that affect the reading experience. Modern notions are in tension with those in the Apocalypse. Telling and reading are positioned

¹ In order to illustrate that narrative provides understanding for human experience, Lawrence Durrell points out that the perspective is shifted by a combination of ellipsis and supplement, as the narratee seeks a precedent for the 'he', 'my' and 'she' that occur in the text. Durrell, L. *The Alexandria Quartet: Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive, Clea* (1957–1960) (London: Faber and Faber, 2005) 210.

² Soper, K. *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 47.

between these temporally and culturally diverting notions. However, thinking in terms of implicit, historical, ideal or any other specifically constructed types of readers is not helpful for an analysis of the narratee experience. This chapter deals with how the reading experience enhances the reader/narratee's freedom to hear and understand. The real-life frames are both challenged and set free³ to produce the experience of the narrated world.⁴

In the analysis of the narratee, the core issues hinge on how the cognitive narratological approach that has not traditionally structured biblical exegesis changes the concept of the reader. Cognitive narratological reading shows that the narration of the Apocalypse constitutes a series of interacting fields of reference extending out of the world of the Apocalypse to the first-century Biblical and Mediterranean world and beyond, involving each new narratee.

At the textual level, the analysis looks at how the reader encounters the deictic expressions in the Apocalypse. As discussed in Chapter Four, the usage of deictic expressions indicates that the narrative does not address its audience directly but in a subtle manner. The analysis shows that this mechanism creates an experience of involvement but also invites the narratees to narrativize. To give an example, the reader/listener overhears what is told to the messengers of the assemblies. The narratees are also allowed to witness the making of the book, how John is shown places and spaces and told what to write and what not. What the narratee experiences as relevant, as a crucial message, is not addressed to the narratees but comes through a report of what is told to the heavenly agents and to Babylon.

At the experiential level, the analysis examines how the experiences the readers or listeners encounter as narratees⁵ may pass through a

³ Narration is seen as anchored in everyday experiences, which implies that comprehension of action as such is a form of narration. In psychology, stories are seen as means of shaping lives, and life is seen as shaping stories. Narrative analysis is concerned with the experience of the world as seen through someone's eyes. Riessman, C.K. "Analysis of Personal Narratives." J. A. Holstein and J. F. Gubrium, eds. *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2003) 331–46.

⁴ Carey, G. *Elusive Apocalypse* 106.

⁵ Narratology distinguishes between internal and external narratees; internal narratees are found within the narrative. They do not surpass the spatio-temporal parameters of the action, whereas external narratees are outside the narrative, any reader/viewer/listener engaging with the artefact. Prince, G. "Introduction to the Study of the Narrative." J. Tompkin, ed. *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-*

process of reflection.⁶ To a large extent, the narratees explain and define themselves in the course of reading. The activity of reading/listening contains narrativizing while 'figuring out'⁷ or 'working on' an understanding of the self in dialogue with others, both a real other and an imagined other.⁸ This is a process where reflexivity refers to 'that which turns back upon, or takes account of the self'.⁹

Another feature of the narratee experience that is analysed here is the way the narratees are drawn into the action by the addressed 'you'. As a deictic expression it includes a possible direct indication towards the audience, the narratee. This second-person pronoun does not necessarily position the reader as historically bound. 'You' can address a narratee equally located inside or outside the narrative, in the present or in the first century audience.

To encourage reader/narratee participation, the Apocalypse also utilizes cultural connectedness in the creation of a possible world through the text. Thus, the notion of the audience engulfed in the making of the narrative¹⁰ can be extended to their active participation as narratees. Through the telling and retelling of stories, mirrors are held up not only to the narratees but also, eventually, to the mirrors, creating a vortex of representation upon representation. These representations of alterity invest themselves further and further back into the mirrors, caching themselves in cross-cultural consciousness. This constant manifestation of something named as separate, confronting us with something 'out there' is part of the experience of alterity.

Connectedness of life. The notion of reader as narratee further relates to the consciousness of life as lived within one's culture. In particular, with regard to how the reader constructs and makes sense of life through narrative, the narratee experience stems from a sense of

Structuralism (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980) 7–25; Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction* 118–30.

⁶ Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 28–9.

⁷ Ricoeur, P. "Narrative Identity." *Philosophy Today* 35 (1991) 80.

⁸ Ezzy, D. "Theorizing Narrative Identity. Symbolic Interactionism and Hermeneutics." *Sociological Quarterly* 39 (1998) 246.

⁹ Holland, R. "Reflexivity." *Human Relations* 52 (1999) 464.

¹⁰ For the theory of possible worlds, see Ronen, R. *Possible Worlds*; Pavel, T. *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); Dolezel, L. *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); Ryan, M.-L. *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

narrative ‘connectedness of life’.¹¹ This connectedness, as a kind of identification, depends on the ability of the reader/narratee to allow sameness with the presented narrative identity¹², yet also to maintain otherness. Ricoeur observes that because we are in the world and because situations affect us we have something to say, we have experience to bring to narration.¹³ What is interesting here is that the temporal and cultural gap between contemporary reality and the ‘as if’ world of the Apocalypse does not presume the suspension of the narrative illusion. This chapter shows how, indeed, the fusion of the two separate worlds contributes to the fascination in the reader/audience. This alterity, which the reader meets in many layers in the narration of the Apocalypse, presupposes the presence of the inaccessible. In other words, the Apocalypse reflects life in a specific ambience that is not available in the empirical world, or is, at times, even denied by it. The analysis of the narratee experience approaches the reading through connectedness of life with relation to the other.

The Apocalypse evokes conditions or qualities of separateness, dissimilarity and distinction. Alterity takes at least three shapes, envisionment, reflection and co-existence. The first two are interrelated. The imagistic reflection of the Apocalypse becomes a trace where the reader perceives the representation or stereotype of the other. This projection tends to obscure the other’s identity through a dynamic relationship between something known – the connectedness of life – and the imaginative power. The reader also experiences co-existence with alterity as a frame for exchange.¹⁴

¹¹ Ricoeur, P. *Oneself as Another*, transl. K. Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 117.

¹² What is selected as representative of an identity involves a complex procedure spread over time and never reaches ‘total mediation.’ Thus, narrative identities are ‘open-ended’ incomplete mediations, a network of perspectives connected to expectations about the future, the reception of the past and the experientiality of the present. Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, transl. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 207; Ricoeur, P. “Narrative Identity” 73–81.

¹³ Ricoeur is convinced that within his concept of identity lies diversity that no narration can fully embrace. Narrative identity is an identity of various stories that is brought to life. Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative* 3:248. The type of identity that arises from the poetic composition of a text is the continuous refiguring of self, as explained by Ricoeur. Klemm, D. E. “Philosophy and Kerygma: Ricoeur as Reader of the Bible.” D. M. Kaplan, ed. *Reading Ricoeur* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008) 47–69.

¹⁴ Burnett, F. “Characterization and Reader Construction of Characters in the Gos-

By relating to the 'you' as multiple narratee identity, the reading or listening experience enhances what, according to Bakhtin, gives expression to the diversity of real life, similar to what the protagonist of the narrative is assumed to encounter in narrated everyday life.¹⁵ Seen in this way, narrative provides the locus for 'creative eventness',¹⁶ where all participants of the narrative, producers, characters and consumers are larger than the narration that contain them. Thus, the experience of reading is dependent upon a sense of balance across the boundary with the alterity. This sense of co-existence between conflicting states of affairs constructs for the reader a realistic storyworld that includes outlandish settings. Readers from all times and locales are drawn in and encouraged to co-narrate with the characters the rendered events. This is made possible by allowing for a reflection on the state of being 'other' or different, and yet the same. This eventually includes a reflection on otherness within one's self.

6.1 'YOU' AS NARRATIVE IDENTITY

According to the Greco-Roman treatise *Peri Hypsous*, second-person direct address is a feature of great writing. Thus, the treatise itself, exploring the sublime, is styled as a letter to a friend.¹⁷ Discussing how

pels." *Semeia* 63 (1993) 3–28; Darr, J. "Narrator as Character: Mapping a Reader-Oriented Approach to Narration in Luke-Acts." *Semeia* 63 (1993) 43–60. For discussion on readers as co-authors of meaning, see Salyer, G. D. *Vain Rhetoric: Private Insight and Public Debate in Ecclesiastes* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 54–61.

¹⁵ Morris, P., ed. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 248–9.

¹⁶ Bakhtin, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, transl. and ed. C. Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 21.

¹⁷ "You will remember, my dear Postimius Terentianus, that when we examined together the treatise" This is the opening line of Longinus' treatise *On the Sublime*. Italics are supplied by me to bring out the second-person address. Rosenmeyer, in her analyses of the ancient Greek letter as literature, demonstrates that fictional letters constitute a useful literary category. By imaginary letters she means letters written in the voice of another and either inserted into a narrative or comprising a freestanding collection. Epistolary technique problematizes the boundaries between fictionality and reality, since, based on a process of selection and self-censorship, the letter is a construction rather than a reflection of reality. In the Apocalypse, the epistolary self-representation, the function of the letter form, and the nature of the relationship between writer and reader are brought to the foreground. Longinus. *On the Sublime* 249; Rosenmeyer, P. *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge:

rhetorical figures can be used to transport the hearer into the sublime, Longinus frequently returns to various forms of direct address in his writing on rhetoric:

Do you observe, my friend, how he leads you in imagination through the region and makes you see what you hear? All such cases of direct personal address place the hearer on the very scene of action. So it is when you seem to be speaking, not to all and sundry, but to a single individual... You will make your hearer more excited and more attentive, and full of active participation, if you keep him on the alert by words addressed to him.¹⁸

The Apocalypse appears to follow recommendations of Longinus as it inserts into the narrative a letter addressing a second-person singular 'you'. To sort out who is speaking and who is listening in the Apocalypse, recognition of a selected epistolary technique for constructing the narrative is necessary. Less relevant is to determine whether the entire narrative or just parts of it is to be considered an epistolary form, as discussed by Gregory Beale.¹⁹ Robert Charles, while dealing with the discussion on the identity of the narratee, supports the manuscript variant that reads: 'to the angel of the assembly who is in ...'²⁰ This would identify the internal narratee as the 'messenger' in a given church.²¹ These observations have led to structural attempts that have distanced the narrative from the experience. The rhetorical implication is that the narrative directly addresses two distinct audiences, one internal to the story, the other external. Thus, the seamless movement back and forth between two distinct locations, internal and external, enables the reader to have a participatory experience.

The second-person narration in the Apocalypse is a textual 'you', used to make the reader feel part of the action. It is the 'you' that you read at the beginning of the Apocalypse: Grace to you (1.4)! You hear it when the narrator, John, discloses himself as 'your' brother (1.9). You hear it addressed by the narrating voice saying: 'If you won't watch, I

Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Longinus. *On the Sublime* 249.

¹⁹ Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 132–5, 223–8.

²⁰ Charles, R. H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* 1: clvii.

²¹ Thomas, R. L. *Revelation 1–7. An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992) 154.

will come like a thief, and you will not by any means know at what time I will come to you' (3.3). You also hear it implied in the very last expression of the Apocalypse in 'Grace ... be with all [of you]' (22.21).

All these 'yous' are different. However, they have a common ancestor you: the reader/audience. Since antiquity, the technique of addressing the narratee both indirectly and explicitly has been very much a part of narrative presentation. Colin Macleod points out that narratee response in the *Odyssey*, represented by songs within song, and hearer or reader reaction are affected by each other.²² Directly addressing the reader is an immediate call for him/her to participate in the action.²³ You are walking down the street and someone calls out: Hey, you! How can you help but turn? Of course, you assume, at least for a instant, that you are the 'you'. You turn because the word 'you' is empty in itself. The vacuum inside it sucks you in, filling itself with you, and it always takes a moment before you realize that you may not belong there. Second-person narration carries the notion that someone outside of yourself knows you, your thoughts and actions.

Thus, a narrative reading that 'if you will not watch, I will come like a thief, and you will not by any means know' (3.3), is an example of looking at events from the narratee's point of view.²⁴ In the narration of the Apocalypse, the theme of watchfulness is repeated, sandwiched between the narrator's report of seeing the dragon and its gathering of troops. We read, 'I come like a thief! Fortunate is he who stays awake and watches his garments, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed' (16.15). It would appear at first that different audiences are addressed, but in the reading experience the text-internal (he) and the text-external narratee (you) merge. Furthermore, they are also merged with John, the experiencing narrator, who is also addressed

²² Macleod, C. W. "Homer on Poetry and the Poetry of Homer." D. L. Cairns, ed. *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 297.

²³ The paraenetic emphasis and the epistolary genre speak for a level of unity with real-life audiences. Collins, J. J. *Seers, Sibyls, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 118.

²⁴ According to Bedford's dictionary, a second-person text is the voice in a narrative told from the second-person point of view, the narrator addressing a 'you.' Murfin, R. S. and S. M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 292. See also DelConte, M. "Why You Can't Speak: Second-person Narration, Voice, and a New Model for Understanding Narrative." *Style* 37 (2003) 204–19.

by the 'you'.²⁵ You need to buy clothes to wear, to cover your shameful nakedness (3.18). John is mostly the addressee of the showing and telling by the celestial voices; thus, by implication, he is a narratee as well.²⁶ The narrating John is told seven times to write to a messenger, 'this I know of you' (2.2,9,13,19; 3.1,8,15), which he does. What the reader experiences as a narratee hearing the exposed 'this I know of you' is a three-fold audience: the messenger of the assemblies, John with his brothers, and 'you' the reader/listener. Through the reported voice (assumed to be the voice of Jesus') addressing John as a mediator and with a disclosure to the messengers (one of whom later identifies himself as equal to John: I am a fellow servant with you, and with your brothers, 19.10; 22.8), the narrative combines, by the use of the 'you', three narratee levels. The words spoken to the second-person 'you' draw John, and equally his brothers, while they also seem to intrigue the reader/audience.

Monika Fludernik proposes that second-person texts frequently have a further communicative level. By telling the story of the past 'you' to the same 'you' at a later point, or while absent, the narrator (speaker) brings in reflexivity.²⁷ The following is an example of such a call to reflexivity in the Apocalypse:

You say, I am rich; I became rich and I need nothing. But you did not know that you are wretched, pitiful, weak, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy gold refined in the fire, so you become rich; and white clothes to wear, to cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, for you to see. Those whom I love I rebuke and advise – So be earnest and repenting! (3.17–19)

The reader as a narratee experiences the follow-up of the narration spoken to a third-person, anyone as a wiser spiritual-self, who would respond positively to the invitation to dine with the much wiser and omniscient narrator (3.20; cf. 19.9).

²⁵ Prince, G. *A Dictionary of Narratology* 84.

²⁶ Richardson, B. "The Poetics and Politics of Second-Person Narrative." *Genre* 24 (1991) 311.

²⁷ Fludernik, M. "Introduction: Second-Person Narrative." *Style* 28 (1994) 288.

6.2 THE OTHER AS ONESELF

The different 'yous' tie the narrative-internal relationships together, yet they direct the attention of the narratees back to themselves. This also applies to the external narratee. The ways the different 'yous' are addressed function as apostrophes. The Greeks invented this technical term for the phenomenon of turning away from the internal narrative towards the reader.²⁸ A similar kind of feature is the rhetorical question. Its effect is to break off the discourse²⁹ by directing questions to the reader or the audience probing their cognition. Both these figures are rhetorical in the sense that they are elements of style and function as attention catchers. I may apostrophize you, my reader, and ask you rhetorical questions. But, although there is no space within the text for you to respond, talking with you as 'the reader' explicitly establishes you as the other in the narrative of this book.³⁰

On the other hand, a similar assimilation effect between oneself and the other is achieved by the I-narration. The conventions of first-person narration genre lead the reader to expect a reasonable degree of identification between the experiencing author and the narrating 'I'. The reader/audience of the Apocalypse absorbs the narrating 'I' as giving an autobiographical account of his experiences. In addition, the 'you' who reads, the 'you' who hears, and the 'you' who receives grace, and the 'we' who are made free and a kingdom of priests partner with the 'I'. Thus, 'you' can be understood as a general otherness of the first-person self-identity. Consequently, it constitutes a reference of meaning, making the narrative intelligible as a shared experience between the 'I', the 'you' and the 'other'. The 'you' occupies a position of otherness between the narrated world of the Apocalypse and the experiencing I-figure. In other words, the 'you' and an intersubjective concept of self are ontologically constituted by the other. Ricoeur advances the notion that the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other.³¹

²⁸ Mey, J. *When Voices Clash: A Study in Literary Pragmatics* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999) 213.

²⁹ Herman, D. *Story Logic* 346–50.

³⁰ If, in the direct address, the narratee does not discover anything noticeably different from his own situation he or she is inclined to take the 'you' literally. Phelan, J. *Narrative as Rhetoric* 138–53.

³¹ Ricoeur, P. *Oneself as Another* 3.

I accentuate this intersubjective self in an analysis of what is exemplified by the anthropomorphic relation between the city of Babylon and the prostitute Jezebel. Additionally, the narrator John, as the 'I', the 'you', 'your brother', and the 'other' can also exemplify the way the intersubjective self affects the reading. In the anthropomorphic mental picture of the city of Babylon, the reader can internally visualize that John is included as a brother in the disapproval addressed to those who tolerate the immoral woman. In the construction of the reader experience, the imagistic representation – I am throwing her on a bed! I will make those who commit adultery with her to suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways (2.20,22) – is by no means accidental. The vivid representation depicts a double metaphor that builds on specific real-life experiences of the uncontrollable pleasures of life in a city, and of a seductive woman, a bed and sexual acts – although the issues at stake are the lures of false teachings (2.20) and the desires and causes of thoughts (2.23).

Jezebel, a woman and a prostitute, parallels a woman and a prostitute named Babylon. The statements concerning Babylon, which either explicitly state or presume a person as the object, bring out the anthropomorphic character of her: (1) they will hate the prostitute; (2) they will strip her; (3) they will make her naked, and (4) they will burn her in fire (17.16). Both stripping and burning recur in the following context with respect to the city.

The stripping of the city is mentioned more specifically in 18.17,19, and her being burned in 18.8,9,18 and 19.3. Burning could refer to Leviticus 21.9: the daughter of a priest who has prostituted herself is to be burned to death. The similarities between these two narrations can be seen in the prostitute's deserved punishment prescribed by the Mosaic Law.

While Babylon is a 'woman' in the context preceding 17.18, the term 'city' is used for the first time in verse 18 and occurs in the subsequent context, in 18.10,16,18,19,21. In the narrative logic, the reader is first confronted with a female character, whose name is Babylon in 17.5, which is identified in verse 18 with 'the great city'. Here identification of the 'woman' with the 'great city' is explicit. Before that, Babylon is predominantly described as a woman.

Moreover, verse 17.16 explicitly names 'the prostitute' as the object of destruction, and presumes a person as character. In the narration the image appears to be gender-specific, as only the woman is called pros-

titute, not her male partners. They are described in terms of their male status as kings, while others, such as 'the nations' or 'the inhabitants of the land', are said to participate in 'her fornication' (similarly as with Jezebel) (14.8; 17.2,4; 18.3; 19.2). Moreover, the use of the terminology πορνεία (fornication 2.21; 9.21; 14.8; 17.2,4; 18.3; 19.2)/πορνεύω (commit fornication 2.14,20; 18.9)/πόρνη (prostitute 17.1,5,15,16; 19.2)/πόρνος (fornicator 21.8; 22.15), is not merely descriptive but is presented evaluatively. Prostitution emerges here as a destructive vice. This also contributes to the image of the woman, who is held responsible for being a prostitute, dying as a prostitute, and for her seductiveness that leads to death (cf. 20.14, where death is thrown into the fiery lake).

That the great prostitute (17.1) is a metaphor does not take away but, in fact, confirms a real-life quality to the image. As a metaphor, it can only work if it is rooted in existing views and practices that real people share concerning prostitutes in flesh and blood. At an implicit level, this reflects and expresses views about women in general. Understandably, feminist analysis of the Apocalypse is concerned with the implicit assumptions about gender in this metaphor³² that bases its function on gender and power relations between men and women. To use a woman as metaphor for a city is more than just a matter of grammar because it works on a perception. In the case of Jezebel and in particular what concerns Babylon, the woman represents the 'other'³³ which eventually is either to be entered (Jerusalem) or destroyed (Babylon). Gender relations, then, play a designed role in the building of a conception – just as in the illustration of a conception.

Schüssler Fiorenza's view is that although Babylon is figured as a woman, the rhetorical-symbolic discourse of the Apocalypse clearly treats it as an imperial city and not as an actual woman. Yet, the narrative (17.16) resists the reduction of the woman/ prostitute to just a metaphor.³⁴ The killing of the prostitute is too disturbing for that. It

³² Johns, L. L. *The Lamb Christology of the Apocalypse of Johan: An Investigation Into Its Origins and Rhetorical Force* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 186.

³³ Adela Yarbro Collins points out that the metaphors are limited and limiting for women, since they are used to project the otherness from the male point of view. Yarbro Collins, A. "Feminine Symbolism in the Book of Revelation." *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993) 33. For identity defined by the male 'other' in the Apocalypse, see also Boxall, I. *The Revelation of Saint John* (London: Continuum, 2006) 250.

³⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *Book of Revelation* 199; Schüssler Fiorenza, E. "The Followers of the Lamb: Visionary Rhetoric and the Social-Political Situation." *Semeia* 36 (1986) 133.

is like watching a horror film and reminding oneself that the blood is not real. Tina Pippin makes use of the reading strategy that factualizes the figurative language of the Apocalypse by describing some of these narrative functions as evoking experientiality.³⁵ This illustrates how the narrative can be read as a felt consciousness, with tension, oppositions, competing voices, and, as a matter of fact, with multiple apprehension. However, the practices evoked by the metaphor are comparable to parabolic details that are not the point of the discourse.

6.3 WHEN NARRATIVE VOICES CLASH

We tend not to be satisfied by a narrative unless all loose ends are tied. Many stories hold back details, in order to increase the effect of the final disclosure of the recounted events or actions, and perhaps of the thoughts of the characters too. However, narratives often frustrate through early disclosures that dilute the effect of the story. Equivocations, partial and suspended answers contribute to the suspense. Roland Barthes explains how the inventive use of these narrative elements enhances the task of the narration to keep up suspense and generate reader experience.³⁶

What the reader/narratee accompanying the character John encounters is in some way contrary to a settled setting for events and their temporality. Regardless of time or locality, the same people are continuously present. Protagonists are temporarily displaced or are part of repeated action.³⁷ The narratee has to come to terms with states of affairs in which certain things that have vividly been experienced seemingly never happened. Yet, the narratee knows that they in fact did happen and clearly are a matter of the past. On the judgment day, for example, all the nations hide in caves of mountains that cannot be there because, in another visualization of the judgment day, they were removed (6.14–17). Conversely, those same people who attempt to hide continue to live as if nothing happened (9.15–20); as a matter of fact, they, instead of hiding, as the narratee was led to imagine, wage war on the day of the Lord (19.19–21).

³⁵ Tina Pippin observes that vivid figurative language affirms difference. Pippin, T. *Apocalyptic Bodies* 76.

³⁶ Barthes, R. *S/Z* 76.

³⁷ Durrell, L. *The Alexandria Quartet* presents several prismatic reflections of the same event.

Moreover, the group of people that has been described as idolaters and is depicted as being part of the everlasting fire (14.9–11) is the same group that constitutes the attributes of those who are there to witness the fall of Babylon on the Day of Judgment. Yet, the narratee is told that they are slaughtered outside the supposedly disappeared city. As proof, their blood amounts to a stream, horses head-deep, flowing as far as 310 kilometres (14.19,20). Having been slaughtered and eaten up by birds (19.21) does not mean that their existence was terminated; they are still present in the everlasting fire (21.8). Moreover, they, surprisingly, stand positioned outside the renewed Jerusalem (22.15) where there is no death or suffering anymore (21.4,5). They play a significant role when dominance and glory are attributed to God (21.24–26).

Suspense, based on the gravity of the events, is created by plurality of action and by complementary results, rather than by granting the narratee's wish to have mysteries explained. The experience of the narrative relies on the multiple illustrations of the judgement day, on the actions related to it, and on the significance of the fact that it is set into an equivocal account. Thus, the picture of the nature of things as shown in the text rests on a radical readjustment of the logical framework, in which known logic has been replaced with the one with no negation, and in which the uncertainty of either/or prevails. To be sure, there has been a variety of interpretive attempts to account for the inclusion of the nations at the very end of the Apocalypse (21.1–22.5) although their judgment and destruction is described in chapters 19 and 20.³⁸

The ensuing understanding is that the Apocalypse adopts the conditions of equivocal depiction, bringing to the foreground opposing forces and producing a kind of variable meaning that is part of human dialogue.³⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of multivocality brings out elements in the composition of the narrative that reveal the extended limits of the literary system within which they operate, as opposed to

³⁸ Mathewson, D. "The Destiny of the Nations in Revelation 21:1–22:5: A Reconsideration." *Tyndale Bulletin* 53 (2002) 121–42.

³⁹ Bakhtin's simple but powerful idea that all utterances are always in a dialogue with previous and future utterances is a recognition of language's fundamental interconnectedness. This emphasizes schemas of action and of events, space and time, and also of the grounding of textual elements of genre and linguistic code in history. Bakhtin, M. *The Dialogic Imagination* 99–100. See also Wood, T. "Cognitive Processes in Text Interpretation: Rereading Bakhtin." *Journal of Literary Semantics* 33 (2004) 25–41.

the limits of real-life.⁴⁰ Along these lines, Roland Barthes defines texts as barraging the reader ceaselessly with impulses for the imagistic but without providing a great final ensemble.⁴¹ Accordingly, readers deal with this unresolved feature of narration by 'naming and framing'.⁴²

Even though a fluctuation of the biblical text may initially seem to challenge the certainty it simultaneously conveys, descriptions of this very process can be found within biblical texts. Matthew records how Jesus takes up the cultural practice of divorce and asserts the authority of Genesis against that of Deuteronomy. In a rereading of the Deuteronomy text, he infers that it was the hardness of heart that shaped the tradition, reflecting upon his audience in relation to the text but not inevitably dictating for continued history. This move initiates an unexpected uncertainty in the biblical text. What emerges is that the words of a biblical text do not automatically, or universally, determine what is to be expected. In the Deuteronomy text, there is no suggestion of an optional reading. However, more is involved: text, reader and framework. In this way, the Matthew passage familiarizes the biblical reader with the continuous reassessment of texts, even biblical ones. In this situation, a whole chain of hearers and readers, reaching back to the beginning, is part of the transformation taking place; the text itself does not bend, as it were, to the code of completed creation of meaning.⁴³

So, for the reader/narratee it is quite plain that the presence of 'all the nations' is required at the grand final; otherwise the ultimate purpose of the acts of God will never be manifest and the inhabitants of the land will not give their due worship and glorify to His ['your'] Name (15.4). This is made possible through a construction of parallel existence, with several sets of structures seemingly corresponding to relationships in the actual world, yet deviating from it. On the one hand, according to the Apocalypse, on the judgment day, the one who calls himself 'I' will arrive and bringing his reward with him, and will give everyone what they deserve (22.12). Consequently 'outside are the dogs, those who

⁴⁰ Bakhtin emphasizes schemas of action, and events, space and time, but also how textual elements of genre and linguistic code are grounded in history. Wood, T. "Cognitive Processes in Text Interpretation: Rereading Bakhtin" 25–41.

⁴¹ Barthes, R. S/Z 11–2.

⁴² Brown, A. *Roland Barthes: The Figures of Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 123–5.

⁴³ Matthew 19.8,9. Countryman, L. "Reading Scripture – and Rereading It" 573–83.

practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices' falsehood' (22.15) – apparently witnessing that they have missed the reward. Being inside necessitates the potentiality of being outside. Present tenses 'is' and 'are' depict a group being outside while others have the right to walk in through the gates of the city. This indicates a potential interchange between the two distinct groups, a personal uncertainty in the certainty of the acknowledgement of God's glory and the acts of reverence by the nations and kings of the land (21.24–27; cf. 15.4 and 22.15). The ambiguity of the outcome persists through the plurality of visual and narrative experience.

The Apocalypse exemplifies how reading results in a multidimensional experience. As reading contexts shift, so does the perception of the text.⁴⁴ While most of the opposing voices within the Apocalypse comply with the dominant perspective of the narrative, challenging expressions are also voiced, which implies that the Apocalypse is not a univocal work as has repeatedly been assumed.⁴⁵ The reader is led to discover the effect of the 'otherness' of the unspeakable voice. The people of new Jerusalem have unspeakable names (2.17), they sing songs only to be learned through another reality (14.3). However, visualization of a heterogeneous multitude joined by the celestial voices of the Apocalypse and voicing a concerted praise to God exposes an all-encompassing space beyond real-life frames of diversity:

A great multitude that no one could count! From every nation, tribe, people and language, set in the presence of the throne and in the presence of the Lamb. Being dressed in white robes and palm branches in their hands. They cry out with a loud voice:

'Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'

All the angels set around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures fell down on their faces in the presence of the throne and worshipped God:

'Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength to our God forever and ever. Amen.'⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Chance, J. B. and M. P. Horne. *Rereading the Bible* 413.

⁴⁵ Carey maintains that the Apocalypse, as an authoritative discourse, is a model case of an attempt to elevate one voice. Carey, G. *Elusive Apocalypse* 183.

⁴⁶ 7.9–12. Cf. 19.1: *I heard something like a loud voice of a great crowd in heaven: 'Praise Yahweh! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.'*

In the initial Merkabah vision four living creatures sing in one voice day and night an unceasing litany: 'Holy, holy, holy, lord the God the Almighty, the one who is and who was and who is to come' (4.8). Moving from the scene of multiformity, as pictured in the parade of the seven assemblies (2.1–3.22), the reader is taken into a uniformity that defines the time after present history. A new time of unification is envisioned to commence, after the harps and flutes representing human activity have stopped (18.22,23). Interestingly, images depicting the occupation humans engage in during this new endless time show only devotion to worship in harmonious refrain. The clatter of workmen, the sound of mill, the voices of bridegroom and bride are never to be heard again, yet the worship of God will last:

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for lord the God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever [as priests]. (22.3,4; cf. 1.6)

The transition from diversity to unity or even uniformity is clear. Nevertheless, the uniformity of the new Jerusalem is contested by the presence of the pluralism that readers sense when facing nations among the worshipers ('the other') that will walk by its light, and the kings of the land will bring their splendour into it (21.24). In several such scenes of univocalisation, the reader of the Apocalypse experiences, as Leonard Thompson points out, a refinement of social equivoque to the purity of a single voice.⁴⁷

The narrativization of the Apocalypse moves the reader towards an experience from difference to likeness, from diversity to unity. This is discernible also in the outcomes of servitude to the beastly powers that surface in the vivid images conjured in the narrative. The heads of the red dragon must have turned pale from astonishment when the beast coming out of the sea turns out to be a mirror reflection of its very being (12.3,18; 13.1; 17.3). This surprising and bewildering image, the dragon and the beast looking at each other eye to eye, places the reader/narratee in a quandary or even revulsion that may serve as a buffer against the monstrous beings and their threats. Cognitive parameters

⁴⁷ Thompson, L. L. *The Book of Revelation* 53–73.

are at work here,⁴⁸ with the reader/narratee possibly comparing him or herself with the bestial characters in the narrative. Surely, not every comparison equals identification with the character. However, visualization through the monstrous provides a buffer through alterity. The difference is essential. The monstrous is threatening, but very distinct from the experience of the reader's own self. The Apocalypse exemplifies a narration that requires buffers to guard the narratee against the fear of unlimited possibility. The first century narratee was most likely aware that confronting a multi-headed snake with a look into the eyes was fatal. When Perseus dared Medusa he used a mirroring shield as a buffer, which kept him from being turned to stone should he have looked at Medusa directly.⁴⁹ Like the hero who looked for Medusa in the mirroring shield the reader may look for alterity to deflect the reflection of the image for which the narration gives ample space.

6.4 THE ART OF SUPPLENESS

In the Apocalypse, there is reason to consider the possibility of a narrative element that uses the narrator to talk about himself and thus create confusion as to who is speaking. The two final scenes (22.6–22.15 and 22.16–22.21) of the Apocalypse demonstrate this point amply. They start with a situation where a 'he' is reported to say: 'these words are trustworthy and true,' which refers all the way back to the opening scene. This is followed by another insert, which appears to be a reminder: 'Listen, I am coming suddenly!' The 'I' of this direct speech cannot refer to the reporting 'he' that is identified as an angel and fellow servant of John, the experiencing 'I'. Immediately following is a 'he' that says: 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll because the time is near' (22.10). What follows could be considered a representation of the consciousness of the co-narrating voice (22.11):

Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong;
 Let him who is vile continue to be vile;
 Let him who does right continue to do right;
 Let him who is holy continue to be holy.

⁴⁸ The readers project the real-world patterns of psychological inferencing on characters, and vice versa. Fludernik, M. *The Fictions of Language* 452.

⁴⁹ Depoorter, T. "Madame Lamort and the Ultimate Medusa Experience." *Image & Narrative* 5 (2003).

Since there is no narrative time to separate the figures, the repeated 'Listen, I am coming suddenly' is rather confusing. The 'he' who instructs not to seal the prophecy has identified himself as the 'you' of the narrative, whereas the rewarding Alpha and Omega is clearly a distinct voice. The summary that follows in 22.14,15 echoes the co-narrator from the introduction (1.3) and indicates some of the essential content of the book.

It is here, at the end of the Apocalypse that it becomes more complicated to distinguish between the objective co-narrator and possibly the simultaneous subjective I-narrator, John. In a direct speech, Jesus says that he has sent his angel to testify to 'you' [plural] these things for the assemblies (22.16). Commentators have attempted to smoothen out the ambiguity by adapting narrative models, mostly scrutinizing the textual elements in the fashion of structural narratological analysis.⁵⁰ Such attempts, however, though they serve formalistic aims in distinguishing various text elements, may not go hand in hand with the discussion about narration and experience. The particular moment of sense making of a narrated account includes narrative aspects as equally relevant as content. What holds for John the 'you' as the receiver of the revelation, holds for the reader/narratees as well. Every reader becomes a receiver of the 'angel'. In other words, what the 'you'-figure learns in the narrative leads him to his initial subjective insight, reinforcing it as a belief.

Distinguishing the interchangeable narrators remains a hurdle in the Apocalypse. The separated I-narrator and I-character are not distinguished. Thus, for example, within the invitation, 'the one who is thirsty can come and whoever wishes can take freely' (22.17), the call can be perceived as addressed either by the I-narrator or the I-character. According to Dorrit Cohn, an interchange between several layers of I-narration (in the Apocalypse Jesus, angel, John, the co-narrator), traversed by a third-person, both spoken and silent, constitutes a discourse, an imagistic consciousness representation scheme that underlines different relationships between narrator and character.⁵¹ In addition to the possibility of the narration coinciding with the character of first-person narration, narratives use the second-person to express

⁵⁰ Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 1143–8.

⁵¹ Cohn, D. *Transparent Minds* 11, 29. For discussion on Cohn's model, see Marshall, A. *The Turn of the Mind: Constituting Consciousness in Henry James*. (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998) 44–74.

feelings and ideas. In the Apocalypse the epistolary scene is addressed mostly in a type of monologue; 'you' [second-person singular] are this and that, which comes down to a separation from the I-figure. The third-person narration corresponds to indirect, direct and free indirect speech. The different relationships between narrator and character can be seen in a fluctuation; thus, it is hard to discern who voices the final words in the Apocalypse, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all' (22.21). Is it the voice of the narrator, John, or the impersonal voice introduced at the beginning? Furthermore, what about the affirming and petitioning voice in the immediately preceding verse: 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus' (22.20) and its narratological relation to the often mentioned 'they' that are repeatedly presented to witness various scenes and the ultimate glory (22.14,15)? A traditional reader will want to draw clear lines between implied author, narrator and character, but the Apocalypse defies such a convention.

Whenever events seem to cross paths in the Apocalypse, the narration changes perspective and remains elusive. Instability experienced by the narratee, never quite sure of how to position him or herself in relation to the narration, or able to pinpoint whose experience is narrated, creates a sense of otherness. The Apocalypse argues its way to this mythic consciousness, to a sense of otherness, which is at times contrary to its calls to adherence. The antiphonal responses add to this effect, as when the people, believing in the concepts of conduct represented by the beast, exclaim 'Who is like the beast?' (13.4), or when celestial beings repeat the refrain, 'Who is worthy?' (4.11; 5.2,9,12), or when the admirers of Babylon lament, 'O city of strength, in one moment she was laid waste!' (18.10,17,19). Opting for the otherness can be precarious and possibly misleading when compared with the intent of the author, as when one comes to suppose that the Apocalypse tends to side with those who are mourning the destruction of Babylon. After all, God's people were called out of Babylon before its destruction (18.4) to save them from the lot of its unrepentant inhabitants. Yet, at the scene of its downfall the kings are still present, weeping at a distance (18.9,10,15), the merchants wonder where they shall now sell their cargoes (18.11), and the maritime world is still there, far off, to reminisce its former greatness (18.17). This is one of those moments of shifting ground. The Apocalypse surprisingly seems to side with those who mourn over Babylon. At the scene of Babylon's downfall, there is a touching nostalgic tone of remembrance that can be mistaken for

authorial siding with the Babylonians (18.21–23):

Thus, with violence
 – The great city of Babylon will be thrown down –
 never to be found again.
 The music of harpists and musicians,
 flute players and trumpeters,
 will never be heard in you again.
 Workman of any trade
 will never be found in you again.
 The sound of a mill
 will never be heard in you again.
 The light of a lamp
 will never shine in you again.
 The voice of bridegroom and bride
 will never be heard in you again.

The violence of the destruction portrayed (18.21) is in contradiction with the beauty and desirability of life: music, creativity, handiness, light and love are by no means vices in need to be destroyed. The poem echoes God's response to Jonah, as mentioned previously, about another great city (Jonah 4.11)!

The pictured ambivalence in Babylon's remembrance is comparable to other instances where a similar ambivalence is discernible, thus opening up possibilities for alterity, as some have observed in the beastly character of the wrathful Lamb (6.16)⁵² and in the lamb-like characteristics of the dragon (with 'horns like a lamb', 13.11).⁵³ As we shall see in the next chapter, the ambivalence extends to similarities in a comparison between Babylon and the new Jerusalem.

Steven Friesen argues that the commonly assumed theme of the Apocalypse as upholding a search for freedom is illusory. In the light of the Apocalypse, the choice in life is not between liberty and bondage, but between servitude that builds community, under the reign of the Lamb (11.15,17; 19.6; 20.6), or servitude that destroys, in adherence to

⁵² Moyise, S. "Does the Lion Lie down with the Lamb?" 182.

⁵³ Barr, D. "The Lamb Who Looks Like a Dragon" 205–20.

the beast (14.9–12).⁵⁴ The reader shares the rebuke and remorse of John. The plurality in readings precedes the questions addressed in a scholarly inquiry. The interest of the query could be either to locate what a narrative could have meant, or to give justice to the narrative features⁵⁵ by focusing on the narrative interplay between narrative and reader. Stephen Fowl connects concern about the potential plural readings of the text to an agenda set up in search for a particular meaning of the text. He not only suggests that narratives initiate pluralistic connotation but also questions whether the concern of the reader should be to establish a singular sense for the text.⁵⁶

The pluralistic character of the narrative induces a reading experience of the Apocalypse that may cause the reader to consider the narrative unreclaimable and impossible to restore within a real-life frame. In due course, every reader will attempt to detect familiar patterns of reality in the story⁵⁷ and as an inevitable outcome, he or she will seek for what is known. The chances are slim that the reader would look for something unfamiliar. Ultimately, this way of knowing something through something else is crucial. The acknowledgement of limits characterizes the reading of the Apocalypse, including the limits of modern western scholarship when it comes to criticism of ancient religious sources.⁵⁸ This reservation is especially made felt when modern literary criticism is applied to the Apocalypse. Epistemologically informed existential probing leads to the appreciation of the immense possibilities of spiritual life, even of the symbiosis of good and evil among the faithful (as in chapters 2–3) and in society (chapter 11). The outcome of the

⁵⁴ Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John* 215–6.

⁵⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza, E. “The Ethics of Interpretation” 14.

⁵⁶ Fowl, S. E. “The Ethics of Interpretation or What’s Left Over After the Elimination of Meaning.” D. J. A. Clines, S. E. Fowl, and S. E. Porter, eds. *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 379–81.

⁵⁷ Propp presents thirty-one functions of the folk tale, to describe the familiar and expected patterns in story. Propp, V. *Morphology of the Folktale*, transl. L. Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968) 64–5.

⁵⁸ For example, tragedy thrived during periods of heavy outward expansion and progress. I am inclined to side with Friesen in that the Apocalypse presents a forbidding view of human existence and reminds us of that we are neither free nor powerful. Friesen, S. J. *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John* 215–6. A very similar thought is expressed by Walter Benjamin in his comment that narratives are predicated on human limitations. Benjamin, W. *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) 94.

coexistence of the just and unjust is a celestial war (chapter 12), to be succeeded by a dispute on whether the beast or the Lamb should be favoured (chapter 13). The injustice of our present reality is depicted in juxtaposition, like the woman and the dragon (chapter 12), or the prostitute and the rider (chapter 17), or Babylon and Jerusalem (chapters 18 and 21). Ambiguities persist even though the elements of hope outweigh those of dismay.

In the Apocalypse, we can discern a multiplicity of conflicting desires.⁵⁹ There is apprehension,⁶⁰ receptivity and intuition without complete comprehension, as the reading strategy seeks for the cognitive condition of the meaning creation through the narrative experience. Apprehension as narrativization, unlike a set theological ideology, is sensitive to the expectations and anticipations produced by literary devices, less captivated with grasping the immanent meaning(s) but engaging in the spread and overlay of meanings. Though the text of the Apocalypse has remained the same for two millennia, what it signifies has changed in accordance with altered interpretive frames. The Apocalypse conveys a consciousness which amounts to an understanding that reflects the Hebrew Scriptures, beginning with the Eden Story and ending with the tree of life (22.2) and having the function of an inter-locker between the Genesis story and the Apocalypse. A touchstone is captured in Isaiah 24.1, 'See, the Lord is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it, he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants,' (cf. Jonah 1.2). This ongoing apprehension of the world is what the Apocalypse presents as an open text – seal not the sayings (22.10) – subject to an ongoing renewal of perception.

So far, I have argued that some of the obscurity seen in the Apocalypse may be the product of a mismatch in reading conventions developed over time. Consequently, these readings may be foreign to the text's narrative patterns. Thus, it is possible that disputable interpretations partly result from the dissonance of form and content in the narrative, and, in some measure, from displaced expectations about the text. In short, a questionable understanding of the Apocalypse may rest upon a possible lack in reader competence for this particular type

⁵⁹ Pippin, T. *Death and Desire* 21, 102, 107, 196–203. Part of the conflict is the human ambivalence towards death.

⁶⁰ History can be apprehended in textualization or narrativization involving grasping complex structuration. Tuominen, M. *Apprehension and Argumentation: Ancient Theories of Starting Points for Knowledge* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007) 113.

of literary product. If we persist in restricting the reading experience of the Apocalypse to rudimentary notions abstracted from it, we may miss other insights we could gain by considering its imagistic mode of presentation. To this task, we will now turn our attention.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TOWARDS AN ANATOMY OF APOCALYPTICALITY

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.¹

The reading experience of the Apocalypse enhances boundary crossing and stimulates conceptual movement within the unreal world, the unfolding of which leads to the temporary displacement of the reader's own reality. In the narrative, the real and the possible coexist. The possible would remain shapeless were it not for the dialogue with something that has been experienced and already exists in real-life frames, available to the creation of meaning.

The appeal of the narration of the Apocalypse does not appear to lie in the potential interpretation of the imagery or in solving the intricacy of showing through telling but paradoxically in its experiential, thus unstable, design. This feature compels imaginative participation and elicits emotions, feelings and convictions as it also resists conceptualization.² Our senses are, for the most part, employed in the narration, yet an enquiry of whether the Apocalypse privileges sight³ over the other senses⁴ does not attend to the narrative experience. The Apocalypse constantly reminds in a very direct manner of the subjective dimension in the narrated world: I see, I hear, I am in rapture, I fall, I feel, I hate, I endure, I vomit, I cry, I know, I smell, I taste, I eat, I am astonished, I am taught, I worship, I testify, I write – I experience. The impression of

¹ This is an extract from T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" (*Four Quartets*), which reflects the poet's religious enquiry. For an analysis of the poem, see Scofield, M. *T.S. Eliot: The Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 214–42.

² Schüssler Fiorenza, E. *Revelation* 31.

³ Keller, C. *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World* (Boston: Beacon, 1996) 42–3.

⁴ Resseguie makes a point that, in the Apocalypse, hearing, with 55 references, has a dominant role. Resseguie, J. L. *Revelation Unsealed* 33. Discussing the senses, Philo, much in line with Aristotle, considered taste, smell and touch as senses beneath approval. Philo. *De Abrahamo* 149–53; Aristotle, *De anima* 2.7–11.

someone's subjective position involves a re-representational suggestion of events⁵ oscillating between the moment of narration, the moment at which the narrated actions take place, the moment of narrativizing the imagistic experience. The narratee is absorbed between narrativity, the 'now' of an experience,⁶ and the literarity, as the 'now' of having had an experience and telling about it.⁷

In the previous chapters, cognitive narratology provided tools for an initial analysis of the Apocalypse from an experiential perspective. This has led to a narratological discussion focused on the choice of the fundamental elements for a narrative experience: the blending of narrating voices, the participation of the reader as narratee, the positioning of one's self and the other, the activation of real-life frames, including the literary, cultural and historical dimensions of knowing while reading. What emerges from the analytical work is that the experiential elements, due to their resonance with factors in cognition and emotion and their presence in several life frames and scripts, cannot easily be captured into a structure. However, the aspects in the narrative experience of the Apocalypse that were recognized by using narratological parameters can lead towards an anatomy of apocalypticity that, through the guiding principle of an 'open' mind, or, as mentioned in earlier chapters, through the guiding 'nous' mindful of literary freedom, brings together their relationship and functionalities. This was discussed in Chapter Two, where I treat the literary Scripture profile of the Apocalypse.

In this final chapter, I proceed to discuss action in space and time that are cognitive parameters guided by the term 'spatialization' that David Herman introduces in his discussion on how narrative constructs space.⁸ After a discussion on conceptual blends, I conclude with

⁵ Adams, J.-K. *Narrative Explanation: A Pragmatic Theory of Discourse*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996; Ronen, R. "The Semiotics of Fictional Time: Three Metaphors in the Study of Temporality in Fiction." *Style* 24 (1990) 22–44; Sturgess, P. J. M. *Narrativity*; Fludernik, M. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* 12, 36.

⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* 1: 62–5.

⁷ To regard the narrated to be literature involves a complex set of conventions, rules, institutions, and historical features that are both within text and within the mind of the one who carries out the cognitive assessment. Miller, J. H. "Derrida and literature." T. Cohen ed. *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 60–3.

⁸ Herman, D. *Story Logic* 263–99. See also Abbott, H. P. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* 173.

an implementation of positioning in space. I thus suggest a spatial view through concentric spaces. This representation of intensive interaction between the narrative and the narratee as a dialogue between the narrated reality and its producers and consumers contributes to the spatial dimension of experientiality. My discussion of the interplay between different levels of narrative aspects exemplifies the extraordinary sensory and cognitive experience created by the Apocalypse. This quality, which I call apocalypticity, can only partially be described as a literary form. It is primarily a cognitive mode. In preceding chapters, the narrative devices were discussed that activate states of the mind, such as the polyvalent use of deictic expressions, the lack of causal logic in narrative sequences, and the shifting narrator voices. In this chapter, the focus is on temporal and spatial relations, the use of conceptual blends including alterations, which form the characteristics of the imagistic form of cognition. Although these features do not exhaust the anatomy of apocalypticity, they are at least a step in that direction.

7.1 ACTION DAY

According to Aristotle, an artefact that is performed must, for the benefit of the audience's understanding, move forward in repetitive and/or circular patterns. On a pragmatic level, this is in order to ensure that the inattentive audience does not miss anything crucial. Furthermore, the events and the tapestry of the narrative dynamics must take place within one day and in one locale, again for the benefit of the reader/narratee. In a typical Greek drama, the dealings span the time between sunrise and sunset.⁹ This is captured as the principle of unity of place and time. However, true unity of time,¹⁰ in which the described events would be identical with the duration of the performance, was not achieved in Greek drama.¹¹ There is a discrepancy between the passage

⁹ Jo-Ann Brant notes that the full storyline of the artefact does not need to be completed within one day, although, as in Aristotles' favourite play *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and in Greek dramas in general, the events take place on a particular day. Brant, J.-A. A. *Dialogue and Drama* 36.

¹⁰ The Apocalypse makes use of a range of temporal markers: ten days (2.10); time of sealing (7.3); half an hour (8.1); five months (9.5); end of time (10.6); measuring time (11.1); 42 months (11.2; 13.5); 1260 days (11.3; 12.6); three and a half days (11.9,11); a time and times and half a time (12.14); action time (16.17); a thousand years (20.2,3,5–7).

¹¹ Bruce Malina argues that, in the first century Mediterranean world, the past and

of time in the narration and the time that the narratee spends listening and viewing. In drama, the inclusion of lengthy secondary narratives takes predominantly the form of contemporaneous, but especially of retrospective and anticipatory reports, known in narratological terms as analepses and prolepses, respectively.¹² Time in the Apocalypse follows an overall pattern of presenting flashbacks and flash-forwards that lead to or are post-events of the action day. The prolepses constitute flash-forwards to possible consequences of the event day described in the narration of the Apocalypse.

7.1.1 *Time of Action*

‘I came to be in the spirit in the Lord’s day to receive the word of God and the witness of Jesus’ (1.9,10) functions as the opening of the first of four spirit raptures narrated in the Apocalypse. The line takes the narratees abreast into the action. The ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ at the beginning of the first spirit rapture is not repeated to introduce the other raptures in 4.2 and in 17.3 or to open the last scene in 21.10.¹³ Only the prepositional phrase ἐν πνεύματι is used in the later rapture events. Accordingly, the more detailed version, I came to be in the spirit in the Lord’s Day, can be considered to have the function of demarcating the overall temporal and spatial identity of the narrative.

However, the utterance ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (1.10) allows for several different emphases of reading: aspects of temporality, spatiality and reflexivity, and the links between them. The second preposition ἐν, though temporal, does not appear to take the reader to a specific point in time on a generally defined time scale. In the overall sense of the narration, a punctual use of temporal referenc-

future were abstract and imaginary and had their relevance for the sake of the present. Thus, the narratee was orientated for the present within the experienced rather than the future, the region of imaginary time. Malina, B. *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels* (London: Routledge, 1996) 192.

¹² Genette, G. *Narrative Discourse Revisited* 93; Rimmon-Kenan, S. *Narrative Fiction* 46–51; Richardson, B., ed. *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002; Estes, D. *The Temporal Mechanics of the Forth Gospel* 31–250. Richardson’s anthology brings together essential essays on major facets concerning the ways narratives traverse their often unlikely routes, and Estes advances a unique and innovative approach to deep-seated narrative temporalities.

¹³ For the spirit rapture as creating a rhythm for the performance, see Filho, J. A. “The Apocalypse of John as an Account of a Visionary Experience” 215.

ing appears limiting. Rather, the narrative cognitive memory accommodates several conceptual days into the reading experience. The narratee is guided towards content-oriented reading when, in 1.3, urgency is introduced because a specific 'time' is at hand. This leads the narratee to experience the reference to the Lord's Day in 1.10 as the entry point to subsequent visualisations (visions) about the significant time of action. Other similar references are the 'great day of wrath' (6.17), the day when God's mystery will be fulfilled (10.7), the time of judgement (11.18), and the time that is at hand (22.10). Thus, the immediacy of the time of action, as was declared in the opening verses and made present in the visualization of the book, is finally affirmed as being at hand. This would entail experiencing a setting for a possible world in which the events of the vision, the action, take place.

The protagonist is moved to various locations within the possible world: to a worship scene, to a desert and to a high mountain, yet, the temporal reference is omitted. Thus, the experience of the reader/listener is that he or she is taken along with John to different scenes by moving in space, but not in time. The sense of the narration would then be: 'While in spirit rapture, I found myself in the Lord's day, watching the action of that day.' In this case, the reference would resonate with the immediate context of an established kingdom (1.6). It could also evoke several narratee associations with the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Psalm 118.24: this is the day that the Lord has made)¹⁴ or with New Testament writings (John 8.56: your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day).

7.1.2 *Secular and Sacred*

The adjective 'kuriakos' was in common use in the sense of 'imperial', as imperial finance and imperial treasury and for the first day of the month, the 'Emperor's Day'.¹⁵ Steven Friesen claims that the Apoca-

¹⁴ The setting of the narration of the Apocalypse alludes to the Hebrew Scripture counterpart found in Ezekiel 3.12ff with the loud voice and the Lord rising from his place. The spirit rapture and the announcement of God's judgment are repeated in 11.1 and 43.5. Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation* 170, 602, 850. Moreover, the first century narratees, familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, probably heard echoes of Isaiah 13.6: *Cry loudly, for the day of the Lord is near ... the Almighty.*

¹⁵ Kraybill, N. *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Mounce, R. H. *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 56; Price, S. R. F. *Rituals and Power*; Drake, H. A. *Constantine and the*

lypse programmatically presents Christ as the true Emperor in contrast with the imperial ruler.¹⁶ Friesen's meritorious views do not negate the perceived dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, since the Emperor was also the head of the religious establishment, and even the secular games were regarded sacred – they were 'sacred games'. Gilbert Dagron provides a complementary perspective. While temporal and spiritual powers were differentiated in the West, in the East they were traditionally combined, as in Byzantium, where the union of these powers prevailed and made it impossible to conceive of any sort of Christianity where the 'imperium' and the 'sacerdotium' were independent of each other.¹⁷ The division into two mutually exclusive, opposed and contradictory groups, spiritual and temporal powers, is a product of later western thinking. Thus, first-century Christians with a predominantly eastern mentality would have had no difficulty with the concept of a sacred Imperium, of which all the inhabitants of the land would be a part. The Hasmonean kingship of the Maccabees in Judea and the ensuing messianic dreams are simple illustrations of this view. Thus, the church-universal envisioned in the Apocalypse is commensurate with the imperial thought-pattern of the time: 'to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people' (14.6); and 'the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it' (21.24). This is contrary to present-day notions of the unease between Church and State that draw on metaphors from the Apocalypse depicting the Church (Lamb or Bride) in contrast with syncretistic elements of secular power and religion (the prostitute or a beast).¹⁸

Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 497; Keener, C. S., B. T. Arnold, and D. W. Baker. *Revelation: From Biblical Text to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 83.

¹⁶ Friesen, S. J. "Satan's Throne, Imperial Cults and Revelation" 351–73.

¹⁷ Dagron, G. *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 8–10. See also Luttwak, E. N. *The Grand Strategy of The Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009) 113–24.

¹⁸ Philip Jenkins invites us to 'see Christianity again for the first time' through the eyes of the Global South that tends to read the Bible through lenses embracing the 'doomsday Jesus,' and whose day-to-day existence is captured by a very literal reading of the Christian Scriptures, and mysticism, puritanism, belief in prophecy, faith-healing, exorcism, and dream-visions that are, indeed, basic to the newer churches in the south. Jenkins, P. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford:

Perhaps the tone of the Apocalypse is not, after all, a covert attack on the Imperium as the traditional paradigm assumes. As discussed in Chapter Three of this study, the Apocalypse exhibits familiarity with the Greek and Roman theatre displaying a spectacular that was part of societal life. The triumphs celebrated in society find their counterparts in the Apocalypse. Expressions of the sublime are crafted in accordance with secular models founded in the real-life frame of the reader/audience in an uncomplicated relationship with everyday life. In addition, as Leonard Thompson suggests, life in Rome was characterized by serenity, as was Roman society through much of the Empire. The assumption that subject people in the Roman provinces had either to venerate the imperial cult or face persecution is particularly problematic.¹⁹ Simon Price argues that later Christianity separated sharply the areas of religion and politics in a way in which they were not separated among first century Greeks and Romans. Accordingly, the practice of the imperial cult accordingly has been misinterpreted and its role has been misapplied in Christian apologetics and polemics.²⁰ This misunderstanding can result in a hostile sociopolitical depiction of the narrative world of the Apocalypse.²¹ Paul Duff, after having discussed, from the vantage point of the alleged animosity between the Empire and the Christian believers, the various secular interrelations between them, concludes that the hostility stems from the local Jewish community²² or factions within the churches.²³ A related view with regard to conflicts

Oxford University Press, 2002) 211–22.

¹⁹ Thompson, L. L. *The Book of Revelation* 131, 161–5, 173. Steven Friesen notes that commentators on the Apocalypse have been too eager to construct a single social setting. Friesen, S. J. “Satan’s Throne, Imperial Cults and Revelation” 351–73.

²⁰ Price, S. R. F. *Rituals and Power* 10–1, 125.

²¹ Nestor Paulo Friedrich argues that the Apocalypse teaches political watchfulness. It upholds two mutually exclusive, opposite and contrary spheres of life, which must not be confused. Friedrich, N. P. “Adapt or Resist? A Socio-Political Reading of Revelation 2.18–29.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25 (2002) 186.

²² St. Ignatius tells that the Judaizers require Sabbath observance, and that he is prone to end up in trouble. There are two text variants of the Ignatian document, but the alternative for a typically Jewish cultic act is not necessarily a corresponding Christian cultic ceremony, performed on the Lord’s Day, rather, a reference to a life conducted in accordance with the Lord’s orders: ‘If, then, those who had walked in ancient practices attained unto newness of hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord’s life/Day.’ Clemens Romanus. *The Epistles of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1946) 71–2.

²³ Duff, P. *Who Rides the Beast?* 6–10, 31–47; Duff, P. “*The Synagogue of Satan*: Crisis

with the temporal powers has to do with a potential internal conflict among Christians.²⁴ Paul Duff goes against the long cherished conventional wisdom that the mention of adversaries in the Apocalypse would refer to the political situation.²⁵ Rather, the Apocalypse warns its narratees of Christians who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan (2.9).²⁶ The narration constructs a picture of those who claim to be brothers but burden their ‘fellow servants’ in Asia Minor with Jewish customs.²⁷

7.1.3 Sinners and Saints

It indeed looks like the us-against-them worldview had no room in the thinking of the first audience. In his doctoral thesis, Warren Gage challenges, on the grounds of intertextuality, the predominant paradigm that envisions the two cities of the Apocalypse – promiscuous Babylon and bridal new Jerusalem – as part of an ethical and political philoso-

Mongering and the Apocalypse of John.” D. Barr, ed. *The Reality of Apocalypse. Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 148.

²⁴ Yarbro Collins, A. “Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Revelation and Its Social Context.” J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs, eds. *To See Ourselves as Others See Us – Christians, Jews, Others in Late Antiquity* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1985) 207–10.

²⁵ Duff, P. “*The Synagogue of Satan*” 147–68. David Aune points out that the emphasis on Jewish hostility and persecution as a cause of antagonism experienced by Christians is a theological convention in Christian apologetics requiring little or no evidence. Aune, D. E. *Revelation 1–5* (Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1997) 163. See also Thompson, L. L. *Apocalypse and Empire* 126.

²⁶ Shaye J. D. Cohen indicates that the issue of Judaizing seems to refer to Sabbath observance. The phrase ‘those who say they are Jews and are not’ may well have been a current expression in the first century. It would have been applied to Gentiles who ‘act the part of Jews’ but were not in fact Jews, and was deliberately misapplied in the Apocalypse to the Jews themselves. Cohen, S. J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 187.

²⁷ Stephen Wilson is careful not to speculate beyond what he thinks evidence bears. He does not try, for instance, to connect the docetic beliefs, alluded to in Ignatius, to the situation described in the Apocalypse. He observes that scholars have been unable to establish a consensus on whom or what Ignatius was addressing when he spoke of Judaism, and to find any convincing links between the described situation and that of Ignatius. Scholars cannot even agree on whether Ignatius faced one set of opponents (docetic Judaizers or Judaizing Docetists) or two (Docetists and Judaizers). According to Wilson, Ignatius most likely faced both Judaizers and Docetists. Wilson, S. G. “Gentile Judaizers.” *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992) 613–5; Wilson, S. G. *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70–170 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 162–3.

phy of radicalized polarity that would reflect the state-church tension, as mentioned earlier. A familiar mental picture the reader might have with regard to the two contrasted cities could be conducive to resolving the dichotomy. One might find in the imagistic depiction of a promiscuous woman (Babylon) the counterpart of the redeemed woman pictured in the Johannine account: the promiscuous Samaritan woman (John 4.18), the woman caught in adultery (John 8.4), and the transformation of Mary Magdalene who became the witness to the resurrection of Jesus (John 20.17) are all part of the shared cognitive real-life frame. This allows for the possibility that the virginal new Jerusalem of the Apocalypse could depict a redeemed prostitute that is called out of the promiscuous city of Babylon (18.4). The imagistic experience would, furthermore, recall the Hebrew scriptural tradition of the redemption of a prostitute from the doomed city of Jericho. In other words, the Apocalypse stages a dramatic re-enactment of Joshua's battle in Jericho. The story of Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho who married an ancestor of Jesus, prefigures the turn in the narration of the Apocalypse, where promiscuous Babylon (18.4) becomes the virginal new Jerusalem (14.4), the bride of Christ (21.9).²⁸

The imagistic pictures depicting the relation between saints and sinners through conceptual metaphors could bridge the divide between human and divine existence. The visualizations display the unexpected alterity of the human-divine relationship and how it can be objectified.²⁹ The metaphors of Babylon and the new Jerusalem are a manifestation of how one concept can slide into the other. The great prostitute (17.1) becomes Babylon the Great (17.5). The transformation of this woman into a city is induced in 17.16 where the devastation of the prostitute takes four stages: two of them, the second and the third, fit a woman, whereas the first and the last apply to a city. In fact, the climax (17.16) speaks first of the destruction of the city and of the woman's denuding,

²⁸ The theme of the redeemed but promiscuous woman can be found also in Hosea and Ezekiel and in the Lukan account of the forgiven woman. Esterhammer, A., ed. *Northrop Frye on Milton and Blake. Collected Works of Northrop Frye* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 152.

²⁹ Kari Syreeni discusses the wedding of the Lamb imagery as it reaches the limits of the city, the saints and the bride. Syreeni, K. "From the Bridegroom's Time to the Wedding of the Lamb: Nuptial Imagery in the Canonical Gospels and the Book of Revelation." M. Nissinen and R. Uro, eds. *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 363–9.

and then the two statements are refocused: the denuding of the woman culminates in the eating of her flesh (17.16; cf. 19.21) while the destruction of the city grows to an all-consuming fire (19.3; cf. 20.9).

The transformation of the bride (21.9) is very similar to the shifts of Babylon; in the following verse she changes into the city of Jerusalem: 'Come, I will show you the bride, the woman of the Lamb.' He took me in the Spirit to a mountain, great and high. He showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God (21.10). In the characterization of the inhabitants of the city, the reader meets also an alteration. While, in chapter 7, these 144 000 are stamped with the seal of the living God on their foreheads, in chapter 14 they are described to be marked by God's and the Lamb's name. Additionally, in chapter 14 they are no longer related to the twelve tribes of Israel but are introduced as male virgins. Having been purchased from among people they are presented as a dowry of the bride to God and the Lamb [bridegroom] (14.4).

The 144 000 male virgins present one of the most puzzling imagistic representations in the Apocalypse. The idea of male virginity contradicted the assumptions of the original audience about what it meant to be a true man. In late antiquity, the role of imitating female virginity was most unnatural for a man, as Virginia Burrus points out.³⁰ This prompts the audience to consider themselves as dissimilar, since an identity based on a version of masculinity so different from popular discourses requires separateness. However, in a similar manner to the Stoic writings the depiction of the male virgins that are commended for endurance (14.12) reveals a collective power over desire and could be associated with the refusal to take the mark of the Beast (14.1; cf. 14.9). These pictures combine presumed masculine strength and feminine meekness in an alternating manner. Similarly, in Christopher Frilingo's words, the metaphorical depiction of the Lamb as Christ vacillates between feminized and masculinized gender roles.³¹ The reader starts by viewing the Lamb as a wounded passive object (5.6) – a feminized Lamb – which transforms into the triumphal rider on the horse (19.11–17; 12.5; 19.15), a masculinized Lamb.³²

³⁰ Burrus, V. "Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance." *Arathusa* 38 (2005) 65.

³¹ Frilingos, C. "Sexing the Lamb." S. Moore and J. Anderson, eds. *New Testament Masculinities* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 299.

³² Huber, L. "Sexually Explicit? Re-reading Revelation's 144000 Virgins as a Response

As to the meaning of the Lord's Day in the discussions on worship and on the relationship between the Empire and the church, it remains elusive on both counts, as a reference to competing religious ideology as well as to assumed hostility felt toward the state institution.³³ For this reason, the scriptural allusions to the Lord's Day as the main scene of action, with which various sub-scenes are linked, may provide a better insight into the reading experience. The odd thing, however, is that, as we have seen, such a 'Day' blends and subsumes a number of 'days', from the 'day' foreseen by the prophets and sung in the Psalms to the 'day' of the Johannine Jesus (John 8.56).

7.2 CONCEPTUAL BLENDS AND SHIFTS

Part of the event of reading the Apocalypse is the experience of alterations. The cues that are imbedded in the narrative trigger inference, as discussed previously, with regard to the deictic shifts. The reader's activity in locating him or herself as well as the events, in time and space evoke sociocultural contextual frames. Furthermore, reader/narratees engage in identifying the characters and images by recurring conceptual frames. Shifts take place within the cognitive domain of the reader, who keeps orientating him or herself according to the presentation of the changing images and characters in the narration of the Apocalypse.

The ability to evoke mental pictures is 'nurtured in the mind' through cultural frames evoking story lines and real-life experiences that contain a sequence of pictures in the context of pictorial narration. Within the sequences of visualization, the narratee experiences conceptual blending that triggers reflection on the experiential cognitive implications. In order to argue for 'embodied cognition,' Vernon Robbins

to Roman Discourses." *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 2 (2008) 3–28.

³³ Sozomen tells that believers in Rome (and Alexandria), 'and almost everywhere' except in Constantinople do not assemble on Sabbath or on Sunday. Argov, E. "A Church Historian in Search of an Identity: Aspects of Early Byzantine Palestine in Sozomen's *Historia Ecclesiastica*." *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 9 (2006) 367–96. Nevertheless, a whole bulk of patristic literature supports the argument that the Apocalypse refers to a particular Christian day of observance. For further discussion, see Bacchiocchi, S. *Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1975) 90–3; McKay, H. A. *Sabbath and Synagogue: The Question of Sabbath Worship in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 21–6.

applies a cognitive theory including conceptual blending and critical spatiality. Reader/narratees' experience is shaped through interaction with specifically located contexts, which provide 'picturing' based on 'seeing' places and spaces not only as physical settings evoking memory of events, including their cognitive experiential value, but also through social and cultural real-life frames. The narrative contains, furthermore, 'reasoning,' which supports reflections that provide meanings in the context of images, actions and feelings.³⁴

7.2.1 *Imagistic Cognitions*

The real-life frames of the spectacles discussed by Christopher Frilingos, and the imperial triumphs discussed by David Thomas were essential cognitive storages of the first century audience (3.1.1). The ancient god stories and the mythical beliefs behind natural forces and cosmic differentiations were an integral part of these traditions contributing to the imagistic world.³⁵ The anthropomorphic protagonists of these tales function as realizations of thoughts.³⁶ These various thought patterns of antiquity, secular and sacred, Hebrew and Hellenistic, were part of creating a reading experience. Similar elements from society and arts could be pointed out to describe the formation of the reading experience of the modern reader as well. Two examples illustrate such conceptual blending: the harvest scene and the temple city.

In the harvest scene of 14.4, the reader's visualization draws upon Greco-Roman culture: I saw, and look, a white cloud! Seated on the cloud was someone like an offspring of a human, with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. This picture can be compared with the Greek God Kronos and his Roman counterpart Saturn, the god of harvest and crops. In honour of Kronos, a monthly festival was held in Athens, to celebrate the harvest. Pictures of Kronos depict him sitting on a cloud with a sharp sickle in his hand.³⁷ The background

³⁴ Robbins, V. "Conceptual Blending and Early Christian Imagination." P. Luomanen, I. Pyysiäinen, and R. Uro, eds. *Explaining Christian Origins and Early Judaism: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 161–95. Coulson, S. *Semantic Leaps* 204.

³⁵ Kirk, G. S. *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) 173–5.

³⁶ Calame, C. and D. W. Berman. *Myth and History in Ancient Greece: The Symbolic Creation of a Colony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) 5.

³⁷ Kronos, with a sickle, appears in Greek art as early as in the 8th century BCE.

of the Kronos story is that he took the throne from Uranus, and the Golden Age of Man commenced, a time of harmony and prosperity. According to the Greek legend, during this period humans lived in a paradise like the Garden of Eden, without greed, violence, toil, or need for laws.³⁸ But this bliss did not last forever. By implication, mortal bodies are, eventually, devoured by time provided by Kronos.³⁹ For the first century audience, Kronos represented commencement and consummation of time. In the Apocalypse, the Greek harvest picture of Kronos meets its end. There will not be any more time (χρόνος, 10.6), which brings about return to the prehistoric paradise, where harmony and prosperity prevail (21.4,5).

The visualization of the temple city could rest on Babylon, the counterpart of new Jerusalem. Babylon is considered one of the seven wonders of antiquity.⁴⁰ Greek legends tell about its Hanging Gardens, and terraced gardens, built in a corner of the palace fortifications and towering over the famous Ishtar Gate. The towering gates were decorated with blue-enamelled reliefs of bulls and dragons and trees had presumably been planted, creating what would have been a majestic view visible to anyone entering on the Processional Way. The circumference of the ancient Babylonian City walls is said to have been 385 stadia, approximately 72 kilometres. The thickness of the walls is described as 32 feet, about 10 meters, and their height 24 meters (50 cubits); that of the towers, 28 meters (60 cubits).⁴¹

How the city of Babylon looked and what it stood for could evoke, even at the outset of conceptual blending, associative pictures of the ul-

Silver, M. *Taking Ancient Mythology Economically* (Leiden: Brill, 1992) 134.

³⁸ Pettazzoni, R. "On the Attributes of God." *Numen* 2 (1955) 1–27.

³⁹ Versnel, H. S. *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1990) 90–135. When Kronos was about to slay his own father Uranus, it was prophesied that his son would some day depose him. To prevent this from happening, Kronos swallowed his children at their birth.

⁴⁰ Finkel, I. J. "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon." P. Clayton and M. Price, eds. *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 1988) 38–58.

⁴¹ Strabo, H. L. Jones, and J. R. Sitlington Sterrett. *The Geography of Strabo* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995) 199. For the measurements, *pous* (pl. podes) – foot, 31.6 cm, is said to be 3/5 of a Egyptian Royal cubit. There are variations from an Ionic foot, 29.6 cm, to a Doric foot, 32.6 cm. *Pechua* – cubit, was 47.4 cm, and cord measure *plethron* (pl. plethra) equalled to 100 podes. *Stadion* (pl. stadia) was 6 plethra, i.e. 600 podes, usually stated as 185.4 m. For reference, the stadion at Olympus measured 192.3 m. With a widespread use throughout the antiquity, there were many variants of stadion, from as low as 157 m up to 211 m.

timate garden, the Garden of Eden. Moreover, images of how it was destroyed, in real-life scenarios, could draw on Hebrew traditions about the destruction of Jerusalem, such as: 'And in that day, His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Thus, the Lord my God will come and all the saints with You.' (Zechariah 14.4,5; cf. the description of the devastating earthquake of Jerusalem in 11.13, that of the fall of Babylon in 18.21, and the repeated descent of the heavenly city in 21.2,10).

The two square shaped cities with a river flowing through, nourishing the inhabitants, are also pictured as sacred mountains. The centre of ancient Babylon had as its focal point the Marduk temple tower, the ziggurat. The name Bab Ilani (gate of gods) refers to a city of cosmic character. The Babylonian creation story *Enuma eliš* pictures the early events which resulted in the founding of Babylon and were followed by an age of turmoil. Finally, Marduk is found to be comparable to the god Ti'amat; he wages war against Ti'amat and gives him a deathblow. After these happenings a new cosmos, earth and heaven, is created. The new Babylon is built consequent upon the fact that Marduk brought about cosmic reconciliation. He is considered worthy of kingship and power. Babylon is prepared for him, where all are gathered to celebrate him as the new Lord.⁴²

Though we know – thanks to archaeology – more about ancient Babylon today than did the inhabitants of Asia Minor in the first century CE there could have been lingering echoes of the *Enuma eliš* at the time of the writing of the Apocalypse. The description of the new Jerusalem in the Apocalypse (14.1) may reflect remote awareness of the Babylon story; however, there seems to be a more immediate recollection of Isaiah (2.2; 8.18; 10.12; 11.9; 24.23; 25.6). Both stories envisage power transfer by the God-King, and the new King's temple-mountain

⁴² An English translation of the text of *Enuma eliš*, which was written in the twelfth century BCE to celebrate the city of Babylon is available at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~hummm/Resources/Ane/enumaA.html>. Cross, F. M. *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 78–9. For a commentary on the poem, see Beblis, O. *Myth of Enuma elish [Assyrian and Babylonian Myth]: First Story of Evolution* (Parker: Outskirts Press, 2006).

city marking a new era. The new Jerusalem is painted in magnificent brush strokes. It surpasses everything man could produce or even describe. It is 2 304 kilometres on each side; the circumference of its walls is more than 9 200 kilometres. The tip of the ziggurat is located almost literally in heaven, 2 304 kilometres in altitude. This makes Babylon of old look microscopic! The majestic Himalayan Mountains rise to a mere 9 kilometres height, which makes the narratee ponder, from the real-life frame perspective, about the nature of this visualization. David Brown invites the reader to visualize the imagery of the Apocalypse. His reflections on the dimensions of the city, which he finds to be ‘dwarfing Manhattan’, make the point that such metaphors are in fact mind-controlling. The reader may revisit ancient traditions, but his or her limited imagination falls short of the comparison.⁴³

7.2.2 Alterations

The final scene in the Apocalypse locates in a square, or street (ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας, 22.2), the rewards: the tree of life. It is earned by the change that has been required. But here there is also an example of the alterations the narrative indicates, the street is God’s garden (ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, 2.7). The reward of becoming a pillar (ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον, 3.12) in God’s temple is annulled when the reader discovers that, in the new Jerusalem, there is no temple (Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ, 21.22). This unexpected experience of alteration is intensified as the narratee ponders about the implications of becoming part of God himself: ‘for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple’ (ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἄρνιον, 21.22; cf. 3.12, ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ). Also the measuring of the temple with a rod (Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ λέγων, ἔγειρε καὶ μέτρησον, 11.1,2), which draws on imageries from Ezekiel and Zechariah, is stretched to include the number of worshipers – an odd manner of counting. In this context, the command to measure, whatever it stands for, clearly means taking the spatial dimensions of something. The sanctuary and the court outside the sanctuary can be measured, and even the altar, but to measure the worshipers with a rod does not make sense.⁴⁴

⁴³ Brown, D. *God and Mystery in Words* 133–4.

⁴⁴ Jauhiainen, M. ”The Measuring of the Sanctuary Reconsidered (Rev 11.1–2).” *Biblica* 83 (2002) 507–26.

Comparable alteration, with some distinctiveness, is encountered in the descriptions of the Lamb and the Lion, the Dragon and the Beast, as well as of the beast in disguise of lamb (13.11–14) and of the lamb with dragon-like wrath (6.16).⁴⁵ Following the victorious battle of the Lamb over the coalition led by the Beast (17.14), the Lamb is altered to a Rider on a white horse who conquers the Beast and its armies (19.19,20). These are comparable alterations. Chapter 17 proclaims the Lamb as the Lord of Lords and King of Kings (17.14), and chapter 19 shows a rider instead, named King of Kings and Lord of Lords (19.16).

The rhetorical questions articulated by the worshipers of the dragon/beast in 13.4, Who is like the beast? Who can make war with it? illustrate how the author/narrator has the reader anticipate the climactic point at which the hostility between God and the Lamb on the one side and the dragon and the beast on the other side rise to a decisive battle. The opposition of the two parties could hardly be described as a dyadic relationship, setting an invitation to explore a double, split image of some fundamental unity between the two; at best, the juxtaposition of the two sides can be seen as completing a battle scene for which both parties are needed. Thus, the second part of the question, who can make war with it, anticipates the irony that the Lamb can.

7.2.3 *Merging of Time and Eons*

A further identification concerns the character ‘I am’ as ‘the Alpha and the Omega’. It occurs in three occasions: 1.8, 21.6 and 22.13. Most exegetes see the first instance as a divine self-designation by God the Father, the ‘Lord God’ (1.8). However, the pronouncement could be attributable to either God the Father or Jesus Christ. Its syntax allows for both. As for the latter part of verse 8 (the Is, and the Was, and the Coming one, the Almighty), it could be seen either as a further direct discourse of self-identification, a qualifying statement by the same person, or spoken by someone other than the one who declares himself as the ‘Alpha and the Omega’. In other words, a narrator that also describes the speaker as the Lord God could say the reported direct speech.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Barr, D. “The Lamb Who Looks Like a Dragon?” 205–20.

⁴⁶ In the Apocalypse, κύριος ὁ θεός is used 23 times, and seven times together with παντοκράτωρ (1.8; 4.8; 11.17; 15.3; 16.7; 19.6; 21.22), which alludes to the Old Testament’s ‘the Lord God of hosts’ (e.g. 2Sam 5.10; Jer 5.14; Hos 12.5; Amos 3.13). Once ‘lord’ refers to a heavenly being separate from both God the Father and Jesus Christ (7.14, the El-

These self-designations and the discussion surrounding them raise the necessary question about the claimed disclosure: how is the one who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and who has made us priestly rulers (1.5,6) connected to the self-designation I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Is, the Was and the one to Come? A closer look at the immediate context surrounding the three 'Alpha and Omega' pronouncements provides a clue that makes it plausible, or even logical, to attribute the closing line of the prologue (1.8) to Jesus Christ rather than to God the Father. The text's structural development seems to establish a criterion – 'worthiness' – for who can qualify as God. His faithful deeds among humans qualify him to be compared to his Father. Subsequently, the same criterion is applied to the faithful followers of Jesus, who likewise 'overcome' (3.4,5).

The reference to 'the Coming one' (1.4) constitutes a parallel to 'the one coming with the clouds' (1.7), hinted at in the third-person in the previous sentence. Another parallel statement parallel semantically and syntactically is the description a few verses later, again in direct speech, 'I am the First and the Last' (1.17). A similar parallel construction is found in 'the one who lives', who identifies himself as the 'living one' who 'was dead' (1.18; cf. 2:8). These successive and repeated self-designations, in first-person and third-person references, are reaffirmations of the identity of the one on who is to be revealed. In some of these instances, however, the identity of the one who presents himself in different tenses at the same time and who can, paradoxically, suffer death at the same time as he is the living one, can be puzzling. Confusion could lead to seeing the 'I am', 'I was' and 'I will be' to refer as much to being alive as to being dead, and vice versa. In the latter case, the mix-up can be all the more acute were the reader/narratee to miss a much earlier self-identification of the one who is 'the faithful witness' (1.5; cf. 3.14, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός).

The 'first and the last' and 'the Alpha and the Omega' (1.8) as synonymous designations are invariably related to the one who has passed through death. Similarly, those who are faithful, even to the point of death (2.10), share in his worthiness (ἄξιοι εἶναι, 3.4). This qualifying substance – worthiness – is the Lamb's prerogative (ἄξιόν ἐστιν τὸ

der). Ten times the usage is in a direct connection with Jesus (11.4,8,15,17; 14.13; 17.14; 19.16; 22.6,20,21). The connection between 22.6, 'the Lord God who sent his angel,' and 22.16 where Jesus attests to that he sent his angel, would, logically, mean that 'the Lord God' is Jesus.

ἀπρίον, 5.12) and justifies the assumption that the Lamb has a 'godly' privilege (5.9,10,12; see also 7.14, 12.11, 19.13). The analogy is that the 'First' and the 'Last', the 'Is' and the 'Was' and the one to 'Come' overcame his moment of trial, and acquired worthiness equal to that of God, and thus is given the right to sit on his Fathers' throne, and is ultimately to inherit a throne and kingdom of his own (7.14–17; 21.6,7). Worthiness is the justification for the Father to give him authority (2.27), and to permit him to sit on his (the Father's) throne (3.21). Similarly, the faithful, whose deeds will be found complete (3.2) and who might have in their faithfulness to God lost their lives (2.10; see also 6.9; 16.6; 17.6; 18.24; 19.2), obtain the right to sit on God's (21.6,7) throne (3.21) and become rulers over the nations (2.26).

Richard Bauckham recognizes that 'the Alpha and the Omega' refers to several objects. He offers his own explanation concerning the Father God and Jesus Christ, which is not, however, completely satisfactory.⁴⁷ A closer look at the second occurrence of 'the Alpha and the Omega' statement gives an impression that the great voice coming from the throne (21.3) is the origin of the pronouncement. The site of the throne in heaven is, undoubtedly, the focalization of the activity attributed to God the Father.⁴⁸ However, Jesus Christ shares the right to sit on the throne (3.21), which complicates the act of specifying with any certainty who is on the throne at any given time. Interestingly, the depiction of the figure on the throne as the one who lives forever (4.9) is the self-description of Jesus Christ (1.18; 11.15). Most of the statements in the text dealing with eternal time have to do with the throne; all the angels, the elders and the four living creatures give praise to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb in the midst of the throne (5.13; 7.13). Elsewhere, reference to eternal time is in connection with the wicked, the beast, and the devil that live forever in affliction (14.11; 20.10), or with reference to the smoke of Babylon that rises eternally (19.3).

Twice the narrative makes a distinction between the Lamb and the figure sitting on the throne (5.7; 6.16). However, as the great voice from the throne narrates, there is ample reason to think that, for those ut-

⁴⁷ Bauckham, R. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 26.

⁴⁸ The theme of the throne is evenly scattered throughout the Apocalypse. Forty-eight references to the throne, in various levels of conduct, bring it in line with Jewish apocalypses, especially Enoch, which shares a similar localization for the action as the Apocalypse.

terances, there are two, even three separate sources: a reporting voice coming from the throne (21.3); a voice belonging to the one sitting on the throne (21.5), and, possibly, a third one which identifies itself as the one who has become 'the Alpha and the Omega', with authority to grant the water of life to those who overcome (21.6).

The third reference to the 'the Alpha and the Omega' is the most ambiguous (22.13). The build-up of the action evolves along with the words that are heard from the throne. One of the seven angels from the presence of the throne invites John to see the bride, the wife of the Lamb (21.9). The angel carries John in the spirit to a high mountain (21.10). John can see the new Jerusalem and notices that the city is without a temple, since the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple (21.22). The following verse introduces a distinction between the Lord and the Lamb: the former is the provider of light, the latter is that very light (ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον, 21.23). On the whole, there is a merger of symbols: light, lamp, temple and Lamb.

The angel brings John to the main street of the city, next to the water of life, which originates from the throne where God and the Lamb are merged (22.2). A new reassurance that these words are trustworthy and true (22.6) is given. The Lord God himself is identified as the one who gave the angel the task to reveal what John is beginning to comprehend. The end of the Apocalypse marks new beginnings that are hinted at earlier in the book (2.17; 3.12).

Parallels and seeming contradictions function to reinforce the impact of the reading. Just when the angel reassures John that 'he' is to come soon (22.7) the voice of Jesus is heard: 'I am coming. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last the Beginning and the End' (22.13). Often when a character uses direct speech the point of view of the speaker is emphasized⁴⁹ with the word 'Listen!' The focal point on the question of 'the Alpha and the Omega' is thus related to Jesus and not to any of the other voices. I, Jesus, sent the angel to give you this testimony (22.16). Here the text refers back to the prologue where the identification is not clear (1.1).

In conclusion, it can be said that the theme of 'the Alpha and the Omega', in its characterization of God the Father and Jesus Christ, goes back to a narrative model that includes parallels and amplifications. First, Jesus has a God as seen in statements like 'I will make you a pillar

⁴⁹ Bar-Efrat, S. *Narrative Art in the Bible* 41.

in the shrine of my God,' 'I will write on you the name of my God,' and 'the name of the city of my God' that is 'coming down from my God,' and 'I will acknowledge your name before my God' if your deeds are complete 'in the sight of my God' and then you can sit on my throne as 'I sat with my Father on his throne' and received my authority from my Father (3.12,5,21; 2.27). Second, the line of demarcation between the two is blurred in the exaltation of Jesus Christ. Third, the citizens and leaders or elders of the new world order receive their respective places as they too are deemed worthy because of their faithfulness. For them Jesus has become God (21.6 Ἐγὼν ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ). These outcomes are anticipated from the beginning (1.6).

7.3 CONCENTRIC SPACES

I am inclined to describe the Apocalypse not as an apricot with a pit at the core but as an onion with many layers that constitute its totality. The multiplicity of its layers creates the readers' experience. I do not mean an onion in merely the literal sense of structure as when, by slicing the onion in the middle, a chiasmic pattern would be revealed. Rather, my approach is like that of Rainer Maria Rilke, who portrays the hidden essence of a rose beneath its petals,

Rose, oh pure contradiction,
joy of being No-one's sleep,
under so many lids.⁵⁰

It is in the peeling of the onion layer-by-layer, figuratively speaking, that a resemblance to structuration unfolds. Like with the rose lids, beneath the layers of the onions we are not left with a hard pit of an apricot. The outcome of the experience of opening up the onion is that we are faced with a space beneath each layer.

In order to retain a notion of a dynamic process, I define my approach, not a structure, but as a structuration. The term used by Jan Lambrecht marks the activities of the reader who engages in extracting the architectonic space of the narrative, while the term 'structure' is reserved for the 'plan consciously intended by the author'.⁵¹ The concen-

⁵⁰ Rilke, R. M. *On Love and Other Difficulties*, transl. J. J. L. Mood (New York: Norton, 2004) 121.

⁵¹ Lambrecht, J. "A Structuration of Revelation 4,1–22,5." J. Lambrecht, ed.

tric space of the narration of the Apocalypse I suggest evolves around the character of John. His observations regarding the past, present, future and the timeless resemble those of Ezekiel's four concentric and revolving wheels.⁵² John as an onlooker, and possibly in the company of the reader, experiences that there are moments when events seem to cross paths repeatedly. Thus, even though all its images are open to alterations, the Apocalypse creates an impression of a cyclical sense of time⁵³ even when all its images are open to alterations. Accordingly, the success of the Apocalypse lies in the principle of action pushing against, but not breaking the visionary form.

Yet, by a change of perspective, often induced by deictic expressions, the elements remain elusive and avoid any explicit reference point. In a reader in pursuit of understanding this raises an awareness of fluctuation and of shifts in otherness between observing and being observed. Thus, as a reader, you are never quite sure of where the 'you' of the narration is in it, nor whose experience is being narrated. The author's strategy of using deictic expressions to achieve this ambivalence was discussed in Chapter Four. In the Apocalypse, the imagined world becomes a construct of the narrated world. Modernist metaphysics posits a fundamental duality of the real and the imaginative. For modernism, the imaginative is part of the realm of the non-real, to which non-belief is the appropriate response. The exclusion of the imaginative from reality makes modernist truth possible.⁵⁴ The most sweeping depar-

L'Apocalypse Johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1980) 77.

⁵² The introduction to the Apocalypse corresponds to that of Ezekiel, naming place, receiver, conditions and the visions of God (Ezek 1.1). This is followed by an introduction of a spatio-temporal visualization. Ezekiel stages four concentric and revolving wheels, each of which moving in any given direction without turning and touching, yet resembling each other (1.15,16).

⁵³ The majority of the early Greek philosophers understood time cyclically, with the emphasis on the return of the sacred Great Year. As to the Christian notion of time, it may be likened to a closed circle reflected in the Alpha and Omega of the temporality of the God of the Apocalypse (1.8,11; 21.6; 22.13). Estes, D. *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel* 39–47. Furthermore, in order for narration to occur, elements and gaps are taken out of their temporal and spatial contexts and configured with other events and gaps. These snapshots create a narrative experience and constitute heterogeneous properties of temporality, including repetitions and circularity, which grant a sense of rhythm within a text based on a time that is relative and warped. Estes, D. *The Temporal Mechanics of the Forth Gospel*, 187–207.

⁵⁴ Nore, E. "Charles A. Beard's Act of Faith. Context and Content." *The Journal of*

ture from the actual world knowledge is not the possible world but the impossible world, which includes contrasting images (19.21; 20.7,15; 21.1,27; 22.5,15). Readers have to set aside the knowledge of their actual domicile and become cognitive residents of the narrated world that they visit through the act of reading/hearing/narrating.

From the compositional perspective, the Apocalypse reminds of William Stevenson Smith's description of ancient divine epiphany and cult images in Minoan art as 'concentric' in design.⁵⁵ The compositional techniques guide the spectator, if only by imagination, first into the centre of the picture and then to the surrounding rocks and plants that frame it. The viewer, as the experiencing subject, transforms the image by adding to it a sense of space.⁵⁶ The structure and function of the performing arts produce similar experience for the spectator. Louis Althusser observes that the world of the narrative is simultaneously its own stage, its own script and its own actors. The spectators can, on occasion, be spectators only because they are first compelled to be actors, caught by the constraints of the script whose authors they cannot be.⁵⁷ Althusser's reflection applies to the reading experience of the Apocalypse, when you as a reader/narratee begin to see yourself in the narration. Thus, the author-actor-spectator relation forms a circle, and applied to a possible understanding of the reading of the Apocalypse, the experience is shaped by a relational circle of narrative-narrators-narratees.⁵⁸ The distance between the separate entities never disappears, even though they, together, create a unique entity. As shown in the analysis, the reading of the Apocalypse unfolds as part of a continuous

American History 66 (1980) 850–66.

⁵⁵ From the zenith of Minoan and Mycenaean civilization, style and composition techniques of art spread throughout the Mediterranean world. Especially large-scale compositions, such as wall paintings, served as source of inspiration in the transmission of artistic ideas and innovations into the subsequent cultures of the region. Foster Polinger, K. "A Flight of Swallows." *American Journal of Archaeology* 99 (1995) 409–25.

⁵⁶ Smith, W. S. *Interconnections in the Ancient Near East: A Study of the Relationships between the Arts of Egypt, the Aegean, and Western Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) 73–5.

⁵⁷ Althusser, L. and E. Balibar. *Reading Capital*, transl. B. Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1970) 193. See also Montag, W. *Louis Althusser* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003) 136–49.

⁵⁸ In its original context, Althusser's comment is about the aims and effects of the Brechtian epic theatre involving actors, audience and author. Montag, W. *Louis Althusser* 143–4; Ichida, Y. "Subject to Subject: Are We All Schmittians in Politics?" *Borderlands* 4 (2005).

re-experiencing of the imagistic configuration in space and time.

Therefore, the narrative temporality of the Apocalypse is not reducible to a linear progression from an initial state through a set of events to a final resolution point. Instead, narrative temporality with regard to temporal cognition falls into three levels: teleology,⁵⁹ which anticipates the end result, or the goal; chronology, the actual succession of events in time; and temporality in the presentation of events in the discourse.⁶⁰ Teleology goes beyond mere succession of causalities by imposing on the composition of chronological sequentiality a unity of point or theme, or a sense of an ending. Through the paradox of chronology and teleology, we can locate the dynamics of narrative on the temporal plane.⁶¹ However, by relating experiential moments as surprise, curiosity and suspense, temporality becomes a constitutive aspect of embodiment and evaluation.⁶² Analogous to a Greek play, the Apocalypse presents a simultaneous insight of time, in which the character sees not only the past and the future but also the present action, which is revealed as if by a messenger. The past, present and future are compressed so closely together that the narratee sees all as part of one picture. The present becomes one phase of a cycle that moves into timelessness.

In the Apocalypse, the imagistic structuration of the narrative is combined with real-life frames and traditions. At every point of the narrative, the reading experience becomes a sequence of relational readings that foster interdependent interplay of surface and depth (context and tradition). Furthermore, the dialogue between the Apocalypse and its

⁵⁹ Culler, J. "Fabula and Sjuzhet in the Analysis of Narrative. Some American Discussions." *Poetics Today* 1 (1980) 27–37.

⁶⁰ Sternberg, M. "Telling in Time (II): Chronology, Teleology, Narrativity." *Poetics Today* 13 (1992) 236–541; Ronen, R. "The Semiotics of Fictional Time" 29, 33–7; Ronen, R. "Description, Narrative, and Representation." *Narrative* 3 (1997) 274–86. Ronen outlines the three basic approaches to narrative temporality, the first of which roughly corresponds with what Adams presents in his schemata. Adams, J.-K. *Narrative Explanation*. See also Herman, D. "Description, Narrative, and Explanation: Text-Type Categories and the Cognitive Foundations of Discourse Competence." *Poetics Today* 29 (2008) 437–72.

⁶¹ Ricoeur characterizes the interrelation between sequentiality, experiential intentionality and teleology in terms of configurality and emplotment, with appropriate reference to the cognitive make-up of story comprehension. Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative* 1: 54–5.

⁶² Sternberg, M. "Telling in Time" 529.

audience has throughout the history shaped the reader. As to the relationship between space and time in narrative spatialization, it could be described as an intersection between temporality and spatial dimensions. Spatialization, applied to the Apocalypse, would be comparable to lineal spatial movements that turn into cyclical and overlapping temporal vortices, circles and faceted spaces in between – like the layers of an onion. What emerges is not a fixed ‘point’ but, rather, an interaction within these faceted spaces ringed by the rotating conceptual circles.⁶³ The free cyclical movement among source, observation, cognition and impulse within the narrative frame gradually creates insight as a reader experience.

Finally, experiencing the Apocalypse is an encounter with a narration that detaches as well as synthesizes, is prone to rhythmic patterns of appearance and disappearance rather than to constancy, and calls for receptivity less oriented toward mastery of meaning and more toward instances of comprehension leading to self-reflexivity.

⁶³ Kristeva, J. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980) 65.

CONCLUSION

I hope you have not been leading a double life,
pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time.
That would be hypocrisy.¹

I started out on a premise that the text comes alive with its readers, and with an observation that for them the Apocalypse is not fixed. As most texts, once it meets its audience the Apocalypse tends to lose control over its interpretation. My intention has been to show, however, that even though its world is constantly re-enacted as a mental event, the text has a distinct situational relevance overarching time and the variety of readers.

My focus has been on the mental processes that accompany the experience of reading the Apocalypse. Part One describes the relevance of such processes in biblical scholarship and discusses different frames (scripts) scholars have used in reading the text. The discussion maintains that original and contemporary readers and listeners undergo a complicated process while assuming their roles as the narratees of the Apocalypse.

The main guideline for this study, rising from the theoretical assumptions of reader/listener experientiality in cognitive narratology, has been that, in the acts of experiencing and meaning creation, both readers and listeners assume the function of narratees. The study has dealt with the relationship, or creative tension, between the factual and the imaginative world of the Apocalypse. It has done so by exploring a) what constitutes the experience of the reader/narratees when they engage with the Apocalypse, b) how reader/narratees create an understanding of an imagined, visualized reality, and c) how real-life frames are part of the process of assigning meaning to the imagined.

I hope to have shown that the reader/narratee acts as both as an 'experiencing I' and as an evaluating, reflecting, framing and narrating 'I'. Constantly present in the reading experience of the Apocalypse are a purposeful selection of the narrated account and openness to re-narration that enable the grasp of the visualized 'other' and the perceived

¹ Cecily to Algernon in the opening scene of act II of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

'possible' meanings. In the narratological analysis, the repositioning of the utilized Hebrew Scriptures is significant; the numerous allusions contribute to the uniqueness of the Apocalypse and enhance its imagistic presentations.

Metaphorical and imagistic passages show how, with every new reading, the interconnectedness and interdependence of discourse are apt to expand into new narrativizations. I have argued that this interconnectedness is unrestricted throughout the text, even though it appears to be restricted by the selection and combination of a great number of elements from the Hebrew Scriptures. I have shown that they are not quotations in an expository context but mere snapshots and grounds for meaningful imagination. Therefore, I have argued that it is safe to conclude the following: first, that the reading process of the Apocalypse lies, largely, in experientiality and combines the imagistic with real-life frames; second, that this implies an ordering consciousness such as a guiding *nous* that does not distort the unique situatedness of single pictures; third, that historical shifts in the conceptual framework of the late first century Roman Empire have altered the socio-historical and ideological frame for the reading strategy of the Apocalypse, and that any subsequent shifts can influence reading frames.

The analysis has established that the reader is engaged by the use of deictic constructions, positioning, narrator voices, reader reflectivity and visualizations. It has also revealed a conceptual blending of networks of images based on multiple frames of experiencing. In the Apocalypse, parameters of experientiality emerge from mystical experience, real-life frames and from interplay between the reader and the text in a virtual process of narrativization. I have explained the characteristics of the narrative experience with the Apocalypse through the term *apocalypticity*. I have suggested that it describes the phenomenon of experiencing the Apocalypse without being overly concerned about traditional interpretations. *Apocalypticity* builds on experiential meaning. This is closely linked with an understanding of a mind or sphere of consciousness that as a 'guiding *nous*' combines the narrative and the situated real-life experience to create meaning.

Reader Engagement

The use of literary devices in the Apocalypse, its eclectic nature and structural characteristics render the acts of reading and listening complicate and subjective. In this study the term 'reading' has combined

the literal engagement with the text and the narratees' experiences. Due to the possibilities offered by the openness of the Apocalypse, the imagistic travel in time and space makes the reading an appealing but tenuous experience. Readers connect to its crafted flavour of seeming spontaneity, cognitively participating in the patterns of thinking indicative of and appropriate to a mystical understanding of life. Often they are blind to how they experience this while engaging with the text.

How this works practically is that the reader becomes repeatedly 'lost and found' in the narration and discovers at each turn meanings, especially when familiar or life-like orders appear. The readers' or hearers' attention is captured in the experience; they do not recognize inferences as when John is given an editing instruction to omit the thunders in his writing (10.4, μή αὐτὰ γράψῃς). Such inferences are elusive, yet intruding deliberate arrangements. The constructed setting of the narrative hints at a pneumatic epistemology conditioned for an interested group to read and hear. The Apocalypse, as shown by the I-narrator, told and recounted by the co-narrator and visualized in pneumatic epistemology, has perceivable qualities of engaging the reader in an experience and in a performance of narrated reality.

Narrativization and Real-Life Context of Reading

The Apocalypse and the readers' constructed consciousness are representations of a narrativization emerging from real-life experiences. By preset configuration, these experiences depend on personal as well as communal consciousness. As readers in varying historical circumstances have approached the Apocalypse, their readings, as a whole, have become a conglomerate consisting of their own experiences, sacred and secular traditions and elements implanted in the text. The reading experience includes the text as a system of elements, by means of which the merging frames collide or assimilate to an appropriated script. The cognitive activity beyond the text turns the act of telling into a process of recollection and self-reflective introspection or rumination. This reflectivity emerges from seemingly empty predicates in the text, arbitrary referential substitutions and shifting images that leave room for meaning between the narrative, the narrating subjects and the narratee. These and other gaps are usually filled by elements from real-life experiences.

The Apocalypse provides anxious readers with means for narrativization. As readers and listeners accept the text's invitation to become

narratees, they contribute to meaning-making by bringing their real-life experiences into it. Consequently, immediacy in the text, expressed in phrases like 'I am coming suddenly' and 'this must happen soon', has, through the deictic use of pronominal phrases, outlived the original setting. 'This I know of you' is an example of this perceived inclusion into the immediacy through the deictic use of the personal pronoun 'you'.

Imagistic Narrativization

For the narratee, the imagistic elements of the Apocalypse portray the world both as familiar and as strange. Thus, the personal experiences of the reader mingle with the visionary appropriation. This includes John himself, who puts down his interpretation of 'whatever he saw' in the form of a visionary appropriation.

In the Apocalypse, images do not remain fixed but, in some of their traits, change, or even turn into their opposites. The narratee experiences 'otherness', yet is trying to come to terms with unexpected shifts and eccentricities, of which the most perplexing relate to the ambiguous identity of the actors. In the experiential crossing between the two worlds, ordinary life and the imagistic world of the Apocalypse, the reader explores the borders of alterity and experiences the reality of the dissimilar.

The analysis of the imagistic points to a paradox in the human way of relating to the presence of 'otherness'. The sorrow for the fall of Babylon goes along with the rejoicing for new Jerusalem. The research has predominantly sustained the grotesque – the horrifying and monstrous – and its rationale of revenge and retaliation. What is told of God's wedding celebration is that the birds are invited to feast at the flesh of the kings. For the original audience, this picture re-enacted the feast of the birds at the flesh of the executed war prisoners following the triumph of the Roman Emperor.

Surprisingly, the pictures of the Apocalypse present a reverse side of this human wish for revenge. One of the outcomes of this study is that constantly varying positioning provides a parallel story to what has predominantly been seen as the actual one. The Apocalypse is usually regarded as the revelation of foreseen dualistic conflicts, but some elements in the text counteract such a narrativization. There are oscillating, revolving relationships, constantly evolving around watching and being watched. The fallen nations watch their own destruction,

including being eaten by birds. Repetitive occurrences of destructions give several chances for spectating. In spite of having been annihilated, the fallen nations appear, time and again, to witness the glory of the righteous.

The Apocalypse is predominantly characterised as a narrative visualizing a consciousness of exclusion, whereas this analysis has opened up a view on specific imagistic and formal elements of the book that allow access to other possible narrations. The imagistic elements of the narrative have demonstrated both a move towards inclusion, carried out as a unified voice of worship, and the reverse story of diversity. To see the splendour and to be seen in splendour requires the presence of the nations who witness the splendour. Thus, the predominately 'black and white' worldview gains shades and the alterity shows suppleness. To enable a reversal from an antagonistic to a shaded narrativization the awareness of the human and of the real (self-reflectivity and real-life frames) is necessary, which makes the hardly graspable appear plausible. In the narrativization, this allows the inclusion of the narratee to go as far as to embedding heavenly beings in the identification. For example, the 'you' in the narrative finds an unexpected identification with 'holy', usually reserved only for God.

Because of the cues provided for interpreting and identifying its characters, the Apocalypse has in its use of the imagistic mode a suggestive identity-building quality. A remarkable peculiarity of the images of the Apocalypse is their metamorphosis. It is mostly manifested in transformations in size and spatiality. The images assume enlarged, expanded and magnified proportions, from human to astral (a tiara of stars, a robe like the moon), or from meek to raving, as the lamb adopting features of the beast, or from terrestrial to cosmic (the descending city dwarfing Battleship Galactica). The implication is that narrativizing freedom is limited and real-life frames are not easily activated. Other visualizations that cannot, in a realistic way, connect possible real-life frames are: Jesus holding in his mouth a disproportional sword, horses wading in blood up to their bridles for 300 kilometres, and the temple mountain reaching up to a height of 2 500 kilometres.

However, in spite of the fact that the frame of the Apocalypse is not contextual for a modern reader, the imagistic texture triggers sequels. There is enough familiarity to allow inferring an endless variety of applications and ways to carrying out the envisioned consciousness of a quality of existence and of things to come. The reader/narratee can nar-

rativize the imagistic scenes in varying degrees of spirituality, from the exegetic images that have decorated sacred and secular spaces since the Middle Ages to narratives like the Narnia Chronicles to filmed visual commentaries like the Star Wars episodes or the Matrix trilogy.

Apocalypticality

In inhabiting the imagistic world of the Apocalypse and taking on the active role of the narratee, every reader participates in constructing the personal and collective, the sacred and secular appropriation of the text. The experience produces a consciousness, which becomes relevant in a spiritual but also pragmatic sense, so that we can talk of its impact not simply in the traditional sense of spirituality but in a more elaborate sense of apocalypticity. In reading the Apocalypse, the reader retains a constructed consciousness of the grandeur of expanded world movements within an imagistic and extra-human alterity.

Throughout this analysis, the Apocalypse was approached both as a medium and as a content. The text itself functions as a vehicle for the visualization of and experiencing God's presence, the 'other' as sublime, in an imagistic mode and in applied deictic functions of the narrative. These characteristics define the medium; they also offer a more intimate way to create spiritual consciousness than by deliberately revealing and arguing for explicit spiritual content. The assessment of different reading paradigms used for coming to grips with the Apocalypse hints towards a medium and a cognitive frame of apocalypticity that acknowledges experientiality as a non-essentialist notion of reading. An experience is not the same for everyone – as 'subjects' of meaning-making all readers are ultimately subjective. Apocalypticity represents a prismatic medium for giving readers an experience of the world using the pull of an imagistic mode of narrating.

I find the involvement of the reader with the three major concepts of my study – narrativization, the imagistic and apocalypticity – significant, to the extent that the prevailing paradigm of the Apocalypse depicting a dualistic polarity is questioned. The reader experiences inclusiveness on several conceptual levels and because of the struggle between radicalized alterity. The imagistic texture takes easily account of a comparable distinctiveness of pictures functioning interchangeably through conceptual overlaps. In the mental landscape, the reader moves within the arena, the triumphs, the literature, the myths, as if there were no boundaries assigned for secular and sacred. In respond-

ing to the addressing 'you', the narratee domesticates the situation, that is, he or she narrativizes the situatedness of the 'you'. The narratee experiences a pull to the transformation of pictures between the promiscuous Babylon and bridal new Jerusalem that represents the move from sinners to saints. Because all conquered and defeated nations are present in the final scene and all participate to bring glory to the worthy the narratee acknowledges the possibility of being among 'all' included in 'the grace of the Lord Jesus'. The potential to be left on the outside necessitates the possibility of accessing the inside, which results, in spite of contrasting poles, in a multidimensional landscape of inclusiveness. Paradoxically, such inclusiveness is self-referential and builds on metaphors that attribute 'otherness' to marginalized groups, however redeemed.

Implications for Further Research

This study presents only a brief discussion of the general cognitive parameters activating a literary – and oral – narrative experience. To arrive at a more detailed understanding of the reading experience and adequate categories for analysis, cognitive aspects require further elaboration for the study of the Apocalypse.

The study contributes to the ongoing shift of focus from a theological preoccupation with the Apocalypse to an interest in its overall communicative aspects. The present study signals a movement towards a methodology that does not need to circumvent recognized sets of literary inquiry but presents text and reader-centred literary perspectives as well as cognitive aspects of meaning creation. The methodological approach of cognitive narratology has been instrumental in bringing out the use of deictic expressions and imagistic concentric structures as communicative means in textual expressions. Meaning therefore appears through reflections on the imagistic awareness of 'otherness' as well as through its undetermined textual nature, and is neither the subject nor the object, nor the interaction of the two. As a transaction, it is something new and different from any of its inputs and influences. In other words, it is in reading that a representation is produced and meaning is given. Accordingly, apocalypticity attempts to describe narrative structure (anatomy) with the ability to kick static narrative entities into movement and process.

Further work towards an anatomy of apocalypticity can clarify issues that have remained open; their clarification would advance the

experience (understanding) of the Apocalypse through a wider application of cognitive narratological methods. In addition to alterations through the imagistic form of cognition emphasized in this study, other elements emerge as crucial for an anatomy of apocalypticity. Aspects related to conceptual trajectories, expectancy and anticipation would benefit from a full-fledged analysis using cognitive parameters. This could aid in expanding apocalypticity as a form of cognition. Another aspect that offers ground for deeper theoretical thought is the guiding nous, a notion initially defined in this study as an ordering space of consciousness. At the level of a narratological approach, the orality of the Apocalypse has motivated the interest in the use of cognitive parameters. Accordingly, the guiding nous can be seen from the perspective of dramaturgical concepts, on which narratological studies have recently begun to draw.² This would provide a comprehensive pragmatic approach to the artefact itself, to its production and to its reception. Most importantly, further research would contribute to the new attempts in narrative analysis aimed at revising the artificial separation of production, text and reception.

² Kindt, T. and H. H. Müller. *What is Narratology? Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003) 299.

POSTSCRIPT

TWELVE STORYBOARDS OF THE APOCALYPSE

The way the audience of the Apocalypse is likely to experience the tension between the narrative content and the imagistic texture is controlled by the guiding nous. As I have stressed throughout this study, when readers and hearers accept to become narratees of the Apocalypse, they are caught in the immediacy of textual presentations and images. They see, experience and even shape that which happens on stage, but – as narratees – they do not see ‘behind’ the stage. In other words, the audience is blind to aspects of the text as a system that has already prepared a script in advance to elicit their knowledge and their apprehension. The guiding nous backstage can pull all the threads and influence the desire of the reader for viewing the artefact with its illusion of transcendental gaze.¹ However, an artefact does not allow a returned gaze; even for the critical reader, to see the self in the others’ eyes, is not given. In the narrative, we find ourselves; each of us will find in narrativity the kind of thing we characteristically wish or fear.²

From the narratee’s point of view, the structuration of the Apocalypse takes place through the concentric shifts and alterations pushed to the limits of the reader’s ability to narrativize. In ‘Concentric Spaces’ (Chapter Seven), I described the successive concentric spaces that the reader experiences, and this is as far as my reader-experience analysis was meant to reach. However, readers stepping back from their role as narratees may be interested in looking backstage. Therefore, this post-script can be helpful in opening a door for distinguishing operations of the architectonic qualities of the Apocalypse that are geared to ‘produce’ a reflective experience.

¹ Holland, N. N. *The I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 112.

² Holland, N. N. “Unity Identity Text Self.” J. P. Tomkins, ed. *Reader-Response Criticism. From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) 126.

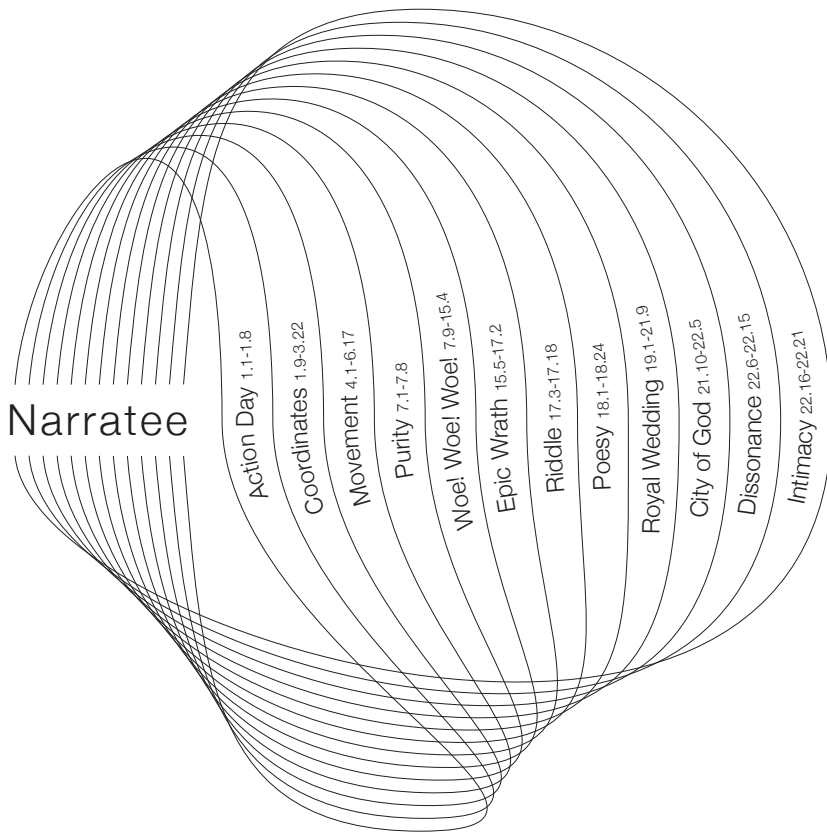


Figure 2: The storyboards of the Apocalypse comprise a multimodal narrative resource, a focal conceptual and organizational tool rendering in words the imagistic events, thus touching otherness from two dimensions: imagistic pictures and language.

The structuration of the Apocalypse provides for several optional conceptualizations. I single out the spatial markers in the narration to identify the storyboards comprising a possible structuration of the artefact. Tavo, among others, has noted that the spirit-raptures (ἐν πνεύματι) and the mentioning of what takes place after this (μετὰ ταῦτα) are potential markers of shifts in the scenes of the Apocalypse.³ In addition to

³ For an overview of studies on the structure of the Apocalypse that present the vari-

these textual marks in the narration, we can detect a swap of the narrator when a third-person narration turns into a first-person one or when the narrator position changes. This is clear to the narratee when the first scene shifts to the second (1.9) and at the end when Jesus addresses the narratee in direct speech (22.16). At certain points, the demarcation is underlined by using several markers simultaneously such as a shift in narration, spirit rapture and a report of change of scene. The transition from one mental picture to another, furthermore, smoothened by interlockers, which are not illustrated in Figure 2 but which I will present together with the storyboards.

The narration pulls the narratee in the centre of the action as the assimilation and self-identification experience creates the impression of being the 'you' addressed in the narration. Thus, the storyboards are not placed linearly to be viewed but form a circle around the viewer. That is to say that the last board is interlocked with the first one.

Action Day 1.1-8

The opening stage consists of eight verses. It covers most of the artefact in a summary type of thematic presentation. There is the introduction of the revelation, the question of the relationship between God and Jesus, angels acting as interpreters and faithful witnesses, the 'one' who reads and the one who listens, the throne, the seven spirits, the present condition of kings and rulers of the land to be punished, the Day of the Lord and afterlife. The subsequent boards are to remind and support an inattentive narratee who may have missed something crucial at this early point. I am the Alpha and the Omega (1.8) is the interlocker, which binds this scene with the following one (1.17).

Coordinates 1.9-3.22

The second storyboard is introduced by a change of voice and by a spirit rapture and comprises the epistolary genre section (1.9-3.22). This

ous textual markers that have been used for structuration, see Tavo, F. *Women, Mother, and Bride* 28-45. For my own structuration, I implement Ralf Korner's argument for using μετὰ ταῦτα as a textual marker. Korner, R. J. "And I Saw" 162. Also spirit rapture ἐν πνεύματι has been referred to as a textual marker for the shift of scene. Korner, R. J. "And I Saw" 161. For comparison, it is worth noting that the most frequently used temporal marker even for the Fourth Gospel is μετὰ ταῦτα and its lexical variations. Estes, D. *The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel* 150-5.

visualization leads the narratee into the perceived world. Similar to the use of rocks and plants as coordinates for viewing the imagistic divine epiphany in Minoan art, the Apocalypse presents physical markers. The roaming in the cognitive map of the Apocalypse makes use of stage levels such as τῆς γῆς, the land,⁴ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, heaven,⁵ ἡ θάλασσα, the sea,⁶ and below the surface of the earth τῆς ἀβύσσου, a kind of middle earth.⁷ Both heaven and hell have their doors, and the mechanics of human movement is present. Jesus is knocking at the door to enter. John enters the heaven's stage through an open door (4.1). Likewise, the Devil is locked and sealed behind a door in the pit (20.3).

Words indicating motion are instrumental in the constructing of cognitive maps. The ambiguous Greek verb ἔρχομαι has the meaning of both 'come' and 'go'. In addition, the text provides many names of actual locations. The narratees infer from their actual world knowledge that the story takes place in the Mediterranean region and Near East, starting in the west and reaching out to the far south: the Empire, the seven Asian cities, the isle of Patmos, the land, Jerusalem, Sodom, Bab-

⁴ In the numerous references to the land, occasional traces of a global implication could be inferred, although they are not likely considering the general usage of the term. Räisänen, H. "Ylösnousseiden valtakunta maan päällä [The Kingdom of the Resurrected on Earth]." *Vartija* 107 (1994) 58–65; Laaksonen, J. *Jesus und das Land*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 2002; Habel, N. *The Land Is Mine: Six Land Ideologies*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. References are 1.5,7; 3.10; 5.3,6,10,13; 6.4,8,10,13,15; 7.1,2,3; 8.5,7,13; 9.1,3,4; 10.2,5,6,8; 11.4,6,10,18; 12.4,9,12,13,16; 13.3,8,11–14; 14.3,6,7,15,16,18,19; 16.1,2,18; 17.2,5,8,18; 18.1,3,9,11,23,24; 19.2,19; 20.8,9,11; 21.1,24.

⁵ To modern readers, the realms of heaven and earth may seem self-contradictory, even confusing. The imageries belong to what were lively currents in Jewish thought and are related to the later mysticism of the Merkabah (chariot-throne) and Heikhalot (heavenly mansions). Rowland, C. C. *The Open Heaven* 271–348; Davila, J. *Descenders to the Chariot*. References in the Apocalypse are 3.12; 4.1,2; 5.3,13; 6.13,14; 8.1,10; 9.1; 10.1,4,5,6,8; 11.6,12,13,15,19; 12.1,3,4,7,8,10,12; 13.6,13; 14.2,7,13,17; 15.1,5; 16.11,21; 18.1,4,5,20; 19.1,11,14; 20.1,9,11; 21.1,2,10.

⁶ The figure seen in Patmos had a voice like the sound of many waters (1.15). Later on in the narrative the sound of rushing water is heard (14.2; 19.6) and water flows from the very centre of existence, from divinity itself (22.1,17). Water stands for both destruction and creation. References are 4.6; 5.13; 7.1–3; 8.8,9; 10.2,5,6,8; 12.12,18; 13.1; 14.7; 15.2; 16.3; 18.17,19,18,21; 20.8,13; 21.1.

⁷ The armies of the beast are thrown into a lake of fire, and the old serpent, the Devil, and Satan are tied up and imprisoned in a bottomless pit (20.1–3). As the book of life is opened, death and hell deliver up the dead, which were in them (20.12,13). Bauckham, R. *Climax of Prophecy* 193–4. For the literary context, see Luke 8.31; 2Pet 2.4; and Rom 10.7; for τῆς ἀβύσσου, 9.1,2,11; 11.7; 17.8; 20.1; and for τὴν ἀβύσσον, 20.3.

ylon, the river Euphrates, and Egypt. However, the territory of the new Jerusalem cannot be found on any map, since the orientation markers of sea, mountains and islands are gone (21.1).

Personal quarrels are another dimension of real-life coordinates present in this storyboard that uses emotions and motivations as markers. Interlocking into the next pictorial representation, a door is introduced. The Laodiceans are invited to open a door so that Jesus may step in. Likewise, the next storyboard pictures an open door and John is encouraged to enter.

Movement 4.1-6.17

The third storyboard is marked by transfers from one scene to another, which are indicated by prepositions: ‘after’, ‘beyond’ and ‘among’ (μετὰ ταῦτα). John hears the same voice as the one that introduced the second storyboard. When he hears the voice he is caught in a spirit rapture. The storyboard commences in 4.1 and closes in 7.1 when the next μετὰ ταῦτα shifts the scene. The expression ‘great day’ functions as another interlocker (6.17; cf. 16.14). The book, or the scroll, which has been mentioned already in the first storyboard and implied in the second, becomes concrete in the third.

Purity 7.1-8

The fourth storyboard comprises verses 7.1 through 7.9, and is framed by two μετὰ ταῦτα expressions as textual markers. The one hundred and forty four thousand echo an answer to the question of the full number of the worthy ones that is asked in the previous storyboard (6.11). This answer is left echoing for the fighters of the Holy War (17.14), all dressed in white.⁸

Woe! Woe! Woe! 7.9-15.4.

The fifth storyboard begins in 7.9 and ends in 15.5, and is likewise framed by two μετὰ ταῦτα expressions. The seven angels function as an interlocker to the following storyboard. The content is the three woes: Woe! Woe! Woe! to the inhabitants of the land!

⁸ For the quest for purity, see Yarbrow Collins, A. “The Book of Revelation” 405–7.

Epic Wrath 15.5-17.2

The sixth storyboard covers verses 15.5 through 17.3. It starts with μετὰ ταῦτα, and the shift to the seventh storyboard is a spirit rapture. The interlocker between the sixth and the seventh is Babylon the Great. The content is the seven bowls of the seven angels.

Riddle 17.3-18

The seventh storyboard moves the scene in a spirit rapture starting in 17.3 and ending in 18.1 where the μετὰ ταῦτα marks the shift. The interlocker between seven and eight is a call to the people. The seventh storyboard is a riddle.

Poesy 18.1-24

The eighth storyboard starts with a μετὰ ταῦτα in 18.1 and ends in 19.1 with another μετὰ ταῦτα. The interlocker is the punishment executed on Babylon. The content of this storyboard is the poetic section about remorse and joy with regard to the passing of Babylon.

Royal Wedding 19.1-21.9

The ninth storyboard is introduced by another μετὰ ταῦτα and ends with a shift of the scene in a spirit rapture. It starts at 19.1 and ends at 21.10. The guiding angel introducing the new Jerusalem functions as an interlocker between storyboards nine and ten.

City of God 21.10-22.5

The tenth storyboard is opened by a spirit rapture. The storyboard begins at 21.10 and reaches to 22.5, which completes the description of the new Jerusalem. The city is described in twelve features, each comprising twelve elements. The interlocker is a scroll, the book of life.

Dissonance 22.6-15

The eleventh storyboard is marked by the change of the narration to predominantly direct speech. The storyboard sets in at 22.6 and reaches until 22.15. 'I am coming suddenly' functions as the interlocker between the eleventh and the twelfth as well as between the twelfth and the first storyboard. The fortunate ones are depicted as the ones who will go through the gates into the city.

Intimacy 22.16-21

The twelfth storyboard begins with a direct speech of Jesus in 22.16 and ends in 22.21. The picture is an all-embracing invitation to come and draw near to the giver of the rewards. Jesus is present and inclusive, but there is also a stern warning not to tamper with the book.

Through storyboards three through six, the interlinkage functions like a chain of experiences. A mechanism of embedded narratives opens up sequels of seven incidents where the seventh item contains the next seven. A chain of continuity is experienced; the opening of a box within a box creates an impression of a continuous movement that is both forwarding and inverted. The visualized sketch of the narrative includes the 'you' – John or anyone hearing – being shown the storyboards, the co-narrator adding details and commenting on them. There is an undeniable affinity between enacted and recounted events,⁹ constituting a 'reality effect'.¹⁰

The type of structuration within which the Apocalypse moves removes the logic of the narrative and makes the reader strive to comprehend it. Its architecture – its narrative design – is as bold, sweeping and idiosyncratic like a Frank Gehry building. It is as though the Apocalypse willfully takes on ways of being overly articulate. This may be accepted, but it does call for reflection 'after' reading the narrative. The reader must work out the experience because the Apocalypse has

⁹ For Ricoeur's narrative theory, which includes the study of drama, see Clark, S. H. *Paul Ricoeur* (London: Routledge, 1990) 152–98; Simms, K. *Paul Ricoeur* (London: Routledge, 2003) 79–100. For narratology and historiography, see Formara, C. W. *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 1–46, 184–9; de Jong, I. *Narrators and Focalizers: the Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 1987) x; Momigliano, A. *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Hornblower, S. "Introduction: Summary of the Papers; The Story of Greek Historiography; Intertextuality and the Greek Historians." S. Hornblower, ed. *Greek Historiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 1–72; Hornblower, S. "Narratology and Narrative Techniques in Thucydides." S. Hornblower, ed. *Greek Historiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 131–66; White, H. "Historical Emplotment" 392–96; Potter, D. S. *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian: Approaching the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 1999) 59–70; Pelling, C. B. R. *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian: Approaching the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 2000) 123–40; Markantōnatos, A. *Tragic Narrative* 1–29.

¹⁰ Barthes, R. *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1989) 141–8; Herman, D. *Story Logic* 267.

confused the time sequence and the roles of the protagonists. It moves swiftly and indiscriminately, like, for example, 'from yesterday to next Tuesday 12-month, with the Friday before last in between'. I would define it in modern terms as cubist, as it cuts back and forth in time, to piece together the roles of the characters.¹¹ Among the serpentine twisting of the sequences the narratee is led toward a (re)construction of the possible missing causes. The interfering narrative not only teases the narratee's curiosity about the past but also urges the reader to know what will happen next. Thus it appears that the Apocalypse is told in a 'natural' way because this is the way we narrate and conceptualize our experiences on a daily basis.¹²

¹¹ Tavo, F. "The Structure of the Apocalypse" 47.

¹² Through its commonly shared meaning-making tools, culture equips us with powers of narration. By cueing customary expectations, these meaning-making devices subconsciously coordinate our conduct. Sherwin, R. K. *When Law Goes Pop: The Vanishing Line Between Law and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 15–39; Shanahan, D. *Language, Feeling, and the Brain: The Evocative Vector* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007) 4–14.

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